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THE ROLE OF GENDER IN LANGUAGE LEARNING STRATEGIES AMONG MALE AND FEMALE STUDENTS AT JAZAN SECONDARY SCHOOLS

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ملخص الدراسة

هدفت الدراسة إلى معرفة الاختلاف بين الذكور والإناث في استخدام استراتيجيات تعلم اللغة الانجليزية لدى طلاب المدارس الثانوية في جيزان و كانت أسئلة الدراسة على النحو التالي:

س ١. ما هي استراتيجيات تعلم اللغة الانجليزية المباشرة الأكثر والأقل استخداما لدى الطلبة الذكور والإناث؟

س ٢. ما هي استراتيجيات تعلم اللغة الانجليزية الغير مباشرة الأكثر والأقل استخداما لدى الطلبة الذكور والإناث؟

س ٣. هل متغير الجندر (الجنس) يؤثر على استراتيجيات تعلم اللغة الانجليزية لدى الطلبة؟

وقد اختار الباحث عينه عشوائية مكونة من خمسين طالب وطالبة : عشرة طالبات من مدرسة جحا الثانوية و أربعون طالباً من مدرسة العز الثانوية للبنين في جيزان. وكانت أداة الدراسة المستخدمة لجمع المعلومات هي استبانة استراتيجيات اللغة الانجليزية (أكسفورد، ١٩٩٠). حيث أظهرت النتائج أن استخدام الاستراتيجيات المباشرة كان عند المستوى العالي لدى الطلبة، فتفوقن الإناث على الذكور في استخدام الاستراتيجيات المباشرة بمعدل (٣.٥٧) وبمعدل (٣.٥٥) للذكور. حيث كانت الاستراتيجيات المعرفية الأعلى استخدام بينما كانت الاستراتيجيات التذكيرية الأقل استخدام.

وقد أظهرت النتائج كذلك أن استخدام الاستراتيجيات غير المباشرة كان عند المستوى المتوسط لدى الطلبة، حيث تفوق الإناث على الذكور في استخدام الاستراتيجيات غير المباشرة بمعدل (٣.٣٥) وبمعدل (٣٣.٣) للذكور. فكانت الاستراتيجيات العاطفية الأعلى استخدام . بينما كانت الاستراتيجيات الاجتماعية الأقل استخدام.

وأشارت النتائج بأن لا يوجد فرق كبير واثري في استخدام استراتيجيات تعلم اللغة الانجليزية بين الذكور والإناث. ولكن الفروق ذات التأثير العالي في استخدام الاستراتيجيات العاطفية والمعرفية لصالح الإناث. وبناء على هذه الدراسة قدم الباحث مجموعة من الاقتراحات والتوصيات ومن أهمها، تكثيف التدريب بما فيما يتعلق باستخدام استراتيجيات التذكر والاستراتيجيات الاجتماعية لأنها احتلت المرتبة الأدنى. و أشار الباحث إلى أهمية توسيع العينة المستخدمة لتشمل عدة مدارس وجامعات و ذلك من اجل تحقيق أهداف تربوية. وكما يمكن توسيع العينة لتشمل خبراء التربية، المعلمين، الطلاب و أولياء أمورهم. وهذا يؤدي لدراسة جميع المجالات التي تؤثر في تحسين استخدام استراتيجيات تعلم اللغة الانجليزية لدى الطلبة.

Abstract

This study aims to investigate gender variation in the use of English language learning strategies by male and female students at Jazan Secondary Schools. The study has attempted to answer the following questions:

- Q1. What are the most and the least frequently used direct language learning strategies among students at Jazan Secondary School?
- Q2. What are the most and the least frequently used indirect language learning strategies among students at Jazan Secondary School?
- Q3. Does the variable of gender affect language learning strategies among students at Jazan Secondary School?

The researcher randomly chose a sample consisting of (50) students, (10) females from Joha Secondary School and (40) males from Al- Ez Secondary School in Jazan. For data collection, the researcher used LLSs questionnaire (Oxford 1990). The results showed that the mean of direct strategies of LLSs for females and males was between 3.57 and 3.59, respectively in favour of females at high level. The highest rank was Cognitive strategies, while the lowest rank was Memory strategies.

The results also showed that the mean of indirect LLSs for females and males was between 3.35 and 3.33, respectively. The highest rank was Affective strategies, while the lowest rank was Social strategies. In general, the results showed that gender had no significant differences in the use of strategies among female and male students, but they showed significant differences between females and males in their use of Cognitive and Affective strategies in favor of female.

Depending on these findings, the researcher recommends more training in using Social and Memory strategies because they are the lowest rank. The researcher recommends that the sample may be expanded to cover many schools and universities. To achieve pedagogical objectives, the sample may be expanded to cover educational experts, teachers, students and parents.

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of Study

There are number of variables have been expected to play an important effect on the frequency and the type of language learning strategies (LLSs) used by ESL and EFL learners (Ananisarab, 2012). Previous studies, examined the relation between language learning strategies (LLSs) and gender as a variable, found that female students used language learning strategies more effectively than male (Zhou, 2010). However, some results showed that male students surpassed female students in their use of (LLSs) (Radwan, 2011).

1.2 Statement of Problem

The researcher believed that contextual limitations could not only have results on EFL students' different patterns of strategy use but also affect the degree and impact of other variables on their use of language learning strategies (LLSs) . From my experience, I assume that EFL Saudi male students use more language learning strategies (LLSs) than females because of the conservative habits which prevent females to establish relationships outside their families. So, giving the characteristics of the EFL Saudi students further research onto their use of the language learning strategies (LLSs) is needed. This study is a step forward in this direction.

1.3 Objectives of Research

This study aims at:

1. determining the most and the least frequently used language learning strategies among students at Jazan Secondary Schools.
2. searching for the relationship between the variable of gender and the choice of language learning strategies by using Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL) by Oxford (1990).

1.4 Research Questions

The current study tries to answer the following questions:

- Q1. What are the most and the least frequently used direct language learning strategies among students at Jazan Secondary schools ?
- Q2. What are the most and the least frequently used indirect language learning strategies among students at Jazan Secondary schools ?
- Q3. Does the variable of gender have an effect on language learning strategies among students at Jazan Secondary Schools?

1.5 Hypotheses of Research

The current study examines the following hypothesis:

1. There are no significant differences in the frequency of direct language learning strategies among students at Jazan Secondary Schools.
2. There are no significant differences in the frequency of indirect language learning strategies among students at Jazan Secondary Schools.
3. There are no significant differences between both genders in the use of language learning strategies among students at Jazan Secondary Schools.

1.6 Significance of Research

The importance of the current study as following:

1. This research will help professors at Jazan Secondary Schools to evaluate students' materials to see if they already include language learning strategies.
2. This study will help educators and designers of students' books to incorporate activities that fit various characteristics of EFL learners; Saudi students.

1.7 Limitations of Research

Difficulties arise when the researcher attempts to conduct the (SILL) questionnaire of language learning strategies among female students at Jazan Secondary Schools since Saudi culture does not allow them to contact with other gender. In addition, this study will focus only on a small number of students at Jazan Secondary Schools and the result will reflect these students only and cannot be generalized to all other Saudi students.

1.8 Operational Definition of Terms

1. Language Learning Strategies (LLSs):

- Specific actions taken by the learner to make learning easier, faster, more enjoyable, more self-directed, more effective, and more transferable to new situations (Oxford, 1990).

2. Direct Strategies:

- The strategies that directly have effect on language learning. They include Memory, Cognitive and Compensation strategies (Oxford, 1990).

3. Indirect Strategies:

- The strategies that indirectly have effect on language learning. They include metacognitive, affective and social strategies (Oxford, 1990).

4. Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL):

- It is a questionnaire developed by Oxford (1990) to assess language learner selection and frequency of LLS and to meet the need for a standardized tool that can be used in variety of second and foreign language learning contexts.

5. ESL:

- English is used as a second language among students (Al-Buainain, 2010).

6. EFL:

- English is used as a foreign language among students (Aslan, 2009).

1.9 Methods and Theoretical Review

The researcher will employ a quantitative method and descriptive design because this kind of survey describes the opinions, attitudes, and behaviors of a large group of people (Mcmillan& Schumacher 2004). Therefore, the five-point Likert scale SILL questionnaire will be used as an instrument to collect data and measure language learning strategies (LLSs).

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

In this Chapter, there are two main sections to be discussed: The first section is the theoretical literature and it gives a comprehensive definition of LLSs. The second section is the empirical literature and it explains the previous studies. Finally, there will be a short summary for the literature review.

2.2 Theoretical Literature

2.2.1 Definitions of Language Learning Strategies

There was no general agreement, in the field of the second language acquisition, on defining language learning strategies. Cohen (1990) viewed LLSs as “learning processes which are consciously selected by the learner”. Likewise, Oxford (1990) proposed them as “the learners’ specific practices or actions that aid them in learning a second or a foreign language”. Oxford (1992) again expanded its definition by saying: “learning strategies are specific actions taken by the learner to make learning easier, faster, more enjoyable, more self-directed, more effective, and more transferable to new situations”.

Chamot and Keatley (2004) also provided another definition for LLSs as “the conscious thoughts and actions that learners take in order to achieve a learning goal”. It is almost self-evidence that the action component of a strategy ought to be describable by someone, especially a teacher or researcher. Moreover, Denemi (2008) explained LLSs as “the preferred way of acquiring knowledge and processing information”.

The most comprehensive and applicable definition that reflects greater emphasis on the effect of LLSs on the processes of language learning is presented by (Oxford, 1992). Oxford defined LLSs as “specific actions, behaviors, steps, or techniques that students (often intentionally) use to improve their progress in developing L2 skills”. These strategies can facilitate the internalization, storage, retrieval, or use of the new language. Therefore, Oxford’s definition (1992) will be adopted in this study.

2.2.2 Importance of Language Learning Strategies

Bialystok (1981) discussed the goals of LLSs as “playing a vital role for assisting learners in mastering the forms and functions that are required for receiving and producing the target language”. Besides that, Holec (1981) argued, the importance of LLSs is to foster students’ autonomy in language learning.

O'Malley *et al.* (1985) believed, the worthiness of LLSs is to make the students, not the teachers, exercise control over the activities. In addition, Zare (2010) mentioned, the importance of LLSs is to help language learners and instructors improve teaching and learning process and achieve their goals.

2.2.3 Successful Language Learner and LLSs

According to Rahimi *et al.* (2009) and Li (2005), the early classification of LLSs started through observing the successful language learners in classroom within natural situation to transfer their strategies to less successful ones. They also believed the successful language learners were generally employing more and better strategies than poorer ones.

According to Aslan (2009) and Zare (2010), successful language learners were presented with more detailed picture through Oxford (1990). Successful language learners used their learning process through Metacognitive strategies, such as paying attention, self-evaluation, and self-monitoring. They controlled their emotions and attitudes through Affective strategies, such as anxiety reduction and self-encouragement. They worked with others to learn the language through Social strategies such as asking questions and becoming culturally aware.

Successful language learners also got information into memory and recall it when needed through Memory strategies, such as grouping, imagery and structure review. They used the new language directly through Cognitive strategies, such as practicing naturalistically, analyzing contrastively and summarizing. Finally they overcame knowledge limitations through Compensatory strategies, such as guessing meanings intelligently and using synonyms when they think about unknown expression. Therefore, Oxford (1990) argued, successful language learners used strategies in six wide categories: Metacognitive, Affective, Social, Memory, Cognitive and Compensatory.

2.2.4 Classification of Language Learning Strategies

According to Zare (2010), most classifications of LLSs reflect relatively the same categorization without any fundamental change. Naiman *et al.* (1978) and Chamot *et al.* (1987), for example, classified their LLSs through identifying the characteristics of good language learners as they were conducted meeting with French and Spanish students who were studying English as a second language to suggest what kind of environment that facilitate their learning process. So from their data they established twenty-six strategies classified under three main groups which were Metacognitive, Cognitive, and Social Affective.

Naiman *et al.* (1978) and Chamot *et al.* (1987) argued that Metacognitive group includes strategies of knowing about learning and controlling learning through planning, monitoring and evaluating the learning activity, Cognitive group includes strategies about transformation of the materials that to be learned as they are directly related to individual learning tasks than Metacognitive strategies, and Social Affective group includes strategies that the students use in communicative interaction with another person.

Moreover, Oxford (1990) classified LLSs into two main classes include six categories: Metacognitive, Affective, Social, Memory, Cognitive and Compensatory. In the next section Oxford (1990) classification will be discussed in details. See Appendix (I).

2.2.5 Theoretical Framework

According to Zare (2010), Hashemi (2011), Oxford (1990) taxonomy of language learning strategies is the most inclusive since She divided LLSs framework into two main classes, Direct and Indirect strategies which are also sub divided into six categories. In addition, Vidal (2002) believed, Oxford framework is probably the most widely used by various researchers because it based on previous studies. Therefore, the theoretical framework of this study, through which the participants will report their use of LLSs, will follow the classification of Oxford (1990).

Oxford (1990) divided the LLSs framework into two main classes as the following: Direct strategies class which are divided into Memory, Cognitive and Compensation strategies. Oxford (1990) argued all Direct strategies require conscious mental processing of the language.

Indirect strategies include Metacognitive, Affective and Social strategies. Oxford (1990) argued all indirect strategies provide unconscious but powerful supports for interaction with language learning by employing different strategies such as focusing, arranging, evaluating, seeking opportunities and lowering anxiety.

2.3 Empirical Literature

Studies on Gender and Language Learning Strategies

According to Hashemi (2011), many researchers have found that gender can cause a significant impact on how students learn a language. He believed that gender proposes differences in LLSs use as sometimes males exceed females in the use of a particular strategy. On the other hand, females employ strategies more effectively.

Oxford (1993) found that female learners surpassed males in all strategies and they used affective strategies more effectively since they tend to pay more attention to their feelings. Oxford also reported that females used gestures more frequently than males. They also used memory, cognitive, compensation, affective and social strategies at higher frequency level than male students.

Li (2005) also found that female participants reported a slightly higher use of all strategies than males and the compensation strategy was the most significant. Furthermore, Hong-Nam and Leavell (2006) concluded that female students are likely to build relationships with others more easily and consistently than male students. Riazi (2007) also examined Arab students and the results were found that females used more metacognitive, cognitive, compensation, social and affective strategies more than males.

All in all, Oxford (1989) summarized, the gender difference might have been associated with women's greater social orientation, stronger verbal skills, and greater conformity to norms, both linguistic and academic. Oxford (1993) also stated that females especially tended to use general study strategies, social strategies, affective strategies and certain conversational or functional practice strategies more frequently than males across a number of studies.

El-Dib's (2004) reported that female students frequently adopted cognitive and compensatory strategies while male students preferred all other active naturalistic language strategies. Furthermore, Radwan's (2010) found that male students used more learning strategies than females did. Radwan though that the differences between the two groups were not significant in most cases.

2.4 Summary

According to Oxford (1990), the taxonomy of language learning strategies is mainly composed of six categories; Memory, Cognitive, Compensation, Metacognitive, Affective, and Social strategies. Consequently, Yang (2010) argued, these six categories are paralleled to 'steps', 'actions', 'techniques', and 'behaviors' which are implemented by learners in using LLSs.

In conclusion, the discussion of the role of LLSs with their relation to gender has been in the agenda of many scholars for a long time, but the results they reached are still inconclusive (Aslan, 2009). Therefore, this study is intended to reveal the interdependency of level of language proficiency, gender and language learning strategies among male and female students at Jazan Secondary Schools.

METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter describes the methodology used in this study. It also describes the population and sampling, data collection technique, validity and reliability, data analysis, ethical considerations, and procedures of the study.

3.2 Research Design

This study investigates the use of language learning strategies by Jezan Secondary Students. The study is carried out by using quantitative research–survey descriptive design because this kind of survey describes the trends, opinions, attitudes, and behaviors of a large group of people (Mcmillan& Schumacher 2004).

3.3 Population and Sampling

The participants will be (50) students, (40) males from Ez Secondary School and (10) females from Joha Secondary School in Jezan who are Arabic native speakers and learn English as a foreign language (EFL). The participants will be chosen randomly from two classes and their ages will range from 16 to 18 years old. The reason for choosing a random sample is to eliminate bias by giving all individuals an equal chance to be chosen. (50) participants are adequate to the whole number of student at both secondary schools in Jezan.

3.4 Data Collection Technique

In 1990, the American psychologist Rebecca Oxford developed the most popular instrument to identify language learning strategies employed by learners. This instrument is called Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL) and is based on classification of language learning strategies. SILL has two versions:

Version 5.1: consists of 80 items designed to collect information from native–speaking English learners.

Version 7.0: consists of 50 items designed to collect information from non-native speakers of English who are learning English as a second or a foreign language.

The Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL, version 7.0) include a paper and pencil, questionnaire employed as an instrument to collect data and measure language learning strategies(LLSs) of the students participated in this quantitative survey study. See Appendix (II).

The (SILL) questionnaire is classified into six categories according to Oxford's strategy system and divided into six parts. The items of SILL questionnaire are evaluated on a five-point Likert scale range from 1 to 5, and each number indicates how often the participants apply the strategies.

1= Never or almost never true of me.

2= Usually not true of me.

3= Somewhat true of me.

4= Usually true of me.

5= Always or almost always true of me.

3.5 Validity and Reliability

According to Al-Buainain (2010), the SILL data reliability furnishes a comprehensive score for each category of strategy. Also, Oxford and Burry-Stock (1995) believed that the SILL instrument is appeared to be the only one language learning strategy questionnaire that has been extensively checked for reliability and validity in multiple ways across different cultures. Moreover, researcher translate some difficult items of SILL into Arabic since the participants major is English to ensure that the participants understand the content of SILL questionnaire.

For the purpose of achieving a high degree of reliability of the instrument, the researcher conducted a pilot study by administering the questionnaire on a small group of 12 students who did not belong to the sample of the study, from Al-Marabi Secondary School in Jazan. Cronbach Alpha formula was applied to determine the reliability of the inventory, through which the total reliability consistency was (0.94) showing an acceptable degree for the study.

Table (1) Cronbach –Alpha results for Reliability

Language Learning Strategies	No. of items	Cronbach's Alpha
Memory strategies	9	0.74
Cognitive strategies	14	0.85
Compensation strategies	6	0.71
Meta-cognitive strategies	9	0.83
Affective strategies	6	0.64
Social strategies	6	0.74
Total	50	0.94

3.6 Data Analysis

The researcher will use descriptive statistical procedures to answer the research questions. Means and standard deviations are obtained through the SPSS statistical package for SILL results. The SPSS general linear model is used to conduct analysis of gender as independent variable with the SILL items as dependent variables.

The Likert scale divided language learning strategies use into three average scores to determine which group of strategies is used most or least in learning English: the student whose mean score above 3.5 (M=3.5) is a high strategy user, the student whose mean score between 2.5 and 3.4 (2.5=M=3.4) is a medium strategy user, and the student whose mean score below 2.4 (M=2.4) is a low strategy user (Oxford, 1990).

Table (2) Average score of LLSs use (Oxford, 1990)

LLSs Use	Average Score	Description
High	4.5–5	Always or almost always used.
	3.5 – 4.4	Often used.
Medium	2.5 – 3.4	Sometimes used.
Low	1.5 – 2.4	Seldom used.
	1.0 – 1.4	Never or almost never used.

3.7 Ethical Considerations

According to Driscoll and Brizee (2010), researchers have to be aware of some ethical consideration in their academic and professional studies to ensure the fairness of results. In this study, the researcher will follow the ethical points such as: asking for the permission of Ez and Joha Secondary Schools administrations and the participants who will be involved in the study. The researcher will not cause any physical or emotional harm to participants. The researcher will inform the participants that the research results will be anonymous. Finally, nobody has the right to access to their answers other than me and their results will be for research purpose only.

3.8 Procedures of Research

In order to conduct the study, the researcher followed these procedures:

1. Reviewing related literature studies.
2. Identifying the research objectives, sample and questions.
3. Preparing the questionnaire.
4. Ensuring the validity and reliability of the questionnaire.
5. Obtaining a permission from the administration of Ez and Joha Secondary Schools to facilitate the study.
6. Distributing the questionnaires in the eighth week of the second semester of the academic year 2018/2019.
7. Analyzing data by using SPSS.
8. Drawing the main findings, conclusion and recommendations for further studies.

FINDINGS

This chapter answers the questions of the study which aim to investigate the most and the least frequently used language learning strategies among students at Jazan Secondary Schools and to investigate the relationship between the variable of gender and language learning strategies (LLSs). The two questions and their results are shown as the following:

Q1. What are the most and the least frequently used Direct Language Learning Strategies among students at Jazan Secondary Schools?

Data is analyzed on the basis of the statistical mean and standard deviation. The results are described in the light of knowing the level of using direct strategies (Memory, Cognitive, and Compensation). The researcher employed all the means and standard deviations, as well as the degree of using the items and the level of approval. The means and standard deviations are calculated and the level of using direct strategies for each dimension of the study, as shown in Table (3).

Table (3)

#	Strategy	Female			Male		
		Mean	Standard Deviation	Level	Mean	Standard Deviation	Level
2	Cognitive	3.64	0,33	High	3.62	0.33	High
3	Compensation	3.62	0,53	High	3.59	0.52	High
1	Memory	3.43	0,52	Medium	3.43	0.48	Medium
	Total	3.57	0,36	High	3.55	0.35	High

It is noticed that the results in Table (3) indicate that the use of the three strategies is placed within high level. It is obvious that this range is as similar as that for females.

Q2. What are the most and the least frequently used Indirect Language Learning Strategies among students at Jazan Secondary Schools?

Data is analyzed on the basis of the statistical mean and standard deviation. The results are described in the light of knowing the level of using indirect strategies (Metacognitive, Affective, and Social). The researcher employed all the means and standard deviations, as well as the degree of using the items and the level of approval. The means and standard deviations are calculated and the level of using the direct strategies for each dimension of the study are shown in Table (4).

Table (4)

#	Strategy	Female			Male		
		Mean	Standard Deviation	Level	Mean	Standard Deviation	Level
2	Affective	3.72	0.49	High	3.69	0.49	High
1	Metacognitive	3.36	0.57	Medium	3.36	0.50	Medium
3	Social	2.97	0.73	Medium	2.92	0.70	Medium
	Total	3.35	0.35	Medium	3.33	0.33	Medium

Table (4) shows the level of using indirect strategies including Metacognitive, Affective and Social strategies. For females, affective strategies come in the first order with a mean of 3.72 and a standard deviation of 0.49. The second order strategies are Metacognitive strategies with a mean of 3.36 and a standard deviate of 0.57 at a medium level for females. The last order strategies are Social strategies with a mean of 2.97 and standard deviation of 0.73 at a medium level.

On the other hand, for males, the affective strategies come in the first ordered with a mean of 3.69 and a standard deviation of 0.49 at a high level. Metacognitive strategies are the second in order with a mean of 3.36 and a standard deviation of 0.50 at the medium level. The last order is Social strategies with a mean of 2.92 and a standard deviation of 0.70 at a medium level.

Q3. Does the variable gender affect language learning strategies among students at Jazan Secondary Schools?

In order to answer the third question of this study, the researcher calculated the means and standard deviations for using the strategies on performance of Jazan Secondary Schools students in language learning strategies (LLSs). Table (5) and Table (6) show means, standard deviations, and sample sizes for gender on direct and indirect language learning strategies.

Table (5)

Means and standard deviations of the study sample size on the direct language learning strategies.

Language Learning Strategies	Gender	Mean	Standard Deviations	Sample Size
Memory	Female	3.43	0.517	10
	Male	3.43	0.483	40
	Total	3.43	0.485	50
Cognitive	Female	3.64	0.325	10
	Male	3.62	0.329	40
	Total	3.62	0.325	50
Compensation	Female	3.62	0.533	10
	Male	3.59	0.517	40
	Total	3.60	0.515	50
Direct Strategies	Female	3.57	0.355	10
	Male	3.55	0.348	40
	Total	3.56	0.346	50

The results of direct strategies of Memory, Cognitive, and Compensation with relationship to gender show the following: the highest mean for females is 3.64 and for males is 3.62 in Cognitive strategies. While, the lowest mean for females and males is 3.43 in Memory strategies. All in all, the total mean of 50 female and male students in using direct strategies is 3.56 with a standard deviation of 0.346.

Table (6)

Means and standard deviations of the study sample size on the indirect language learning strategies.

Language Learning Strategies	Gender	Mean	Standard Deviations	Sample Size
Metacognitive	Female	3.63	0.573	10
	Male	3.63	0.504	40
	Total	3.63	0.512	50
Affective	Female	3.72	0.491	10
	Male	3.69	0.494	40
	Total	3.69	0.488	50
Social	Female	2.79	0.732	10
	Male	2.92	0.696	40
	Total	2.93	0.969	50
Indirect Strategies	Female	3.35	0.346	10
	Male	3.33	0.334	40
	Total	3.33	0.333	50

The results of indirect strategies of Metacognitive, Affective, and Social with relationship to gender show the following: the highest mean for females is 3.72 and 3.69 for males in Affective strategies. Furthermore, the lowest value is 2.79 for females and 2.92 for males in Social strategies. All in all, the total mean of 50 female and male students in using indirect strategies is 3.33 with a standard deviation of 0.333.

DISCUSSION, CONCLUSION and RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Discussion of the First Question

Q1. What are the most and the least frequently used direct language learning strategies among students at Jazan Secondary Schools?

The result indicates that the most frequent direct learning strategies used among female and male students were Cognitive strategies and the least strategies were Memory strategies. Moreover, female students surpassed their counterparts slightly in using Cognitive strategies such as practicing, receiving and sending messages, analyzing and reasoning and creating structure for input and output with means of (3.64 – 3.62) respectively.

The results showed that there were no statistically significant differences between female and male students in using direct learning strategies. Female students slightly preferred Compensation strategies more than male students (3.62 – 3.59) respectively. Both female and male students used Memory strategies equally (3.43). The total use of Direct Learning Strategies for female and male students was from 3.57 to 3.55 respectively.

The findings of study are consistent with Hamed (2004) which indicated that there were no significant differences in Direct Learning Strategies between female and male students. Al Omari (1997) also reported that female students have surpassed male students in the use of Cognitive strategies.

5.2 Discussion of the Second Question

Q1. What are the most and the least frequently used direct language learning strategies among students at Jezan Secondary Schools?

The result showed that there were no statistically significant differences between female and male students in using indirect language learning strategies. The findings of the study showed that Affective strategies were the highest among female and male students. Besides that, female students slightly surpassed their counter parts in Affective strategies with means between 3.72 and 3.69 and social strategies with means between 2.97 and 2.92 respectively. In addition, both female and male students used social strategies at the same level with a mean of 3.36.

The findings of the study were consistent with Shmais (2003) who showed that Arab female students do not significantly differ from Arab male students in their use of Language Learning Strategies.

Social strategies are considered one of the strategic tools to practice communication in English in terms of interpersonal behaviours, asking questions, asking for clarification and help and talking to native speakers. This result indicates the need to improve conversational skills (listening and speaking), social strategies that are necessary for students at Jazan Secondary Schools.

5.3 Discussion of the Third Question

Q3. Does the variable gender affects on language learning strategies among students at Jazan Secondary Schools?

The results of the study showed that there were no statistically significant differences between female and male students in using direct strategies. Moreover, the findings reported that there were no significant differences between female and male students in using indirect strategies, but they showed significant differences between females and males in their use of Cognitive and Affective strategies in favor of females.

There are possible reasons that gender differences do not affect language learning strategies in the current study. English language has been important to Saudi learners for both female and male students and it has been a compulsory subject in the Saudi educational curriculum. Both female and male students consider English language a crucial component in their career and prestige as well as their desire to improve their English.

The results of the study were consistent with Shmais (2003) research which reported that female students did not significantly differ from male students in using Language Learning Strategies.

5.4 Conclusion

This study aimed to investigate the use of LLSs among students at Jezan Secondary Schools. Using LLSs enables students to take responsibility for their own learning by enhancing learners' autonomy, independence and self-direction. Students use Cognitive strategies at a high level compared to other strategies in direct strategies because they are taught how to use Cognitive strategies and are not well aware of Memory strategies. Since the participants of the study were Saudi, one possible reason for these findings may be related to the Saudi educational system where classes are more teacher-centered. Saudi learners prefer to memorize, take notes and highlight important knowledge. These strategies are mainly categorized as Cognitive learning strategies. Memory strategies occupied the lowest rank in direct strategies.

But for indirect strategies, the students use Affective strategies at a high level compared to other strategies because they are given opportunities to raise their awareness of Affective learning strategies. They feel comfortable discussing their feelings and attitudes with others. Social strategies occupied the lowest rank in indirect strategies.

The research found that the differences in gender do not have a significant effect on LLSs. The strategies level used by female and male students at Jezan Secondary Schools were similar and the variable of gender was not crucial element in affecting the LLSs. Both female and male students should not only emphasize on learning but also use variety of LLSs to improve their English.

Motivation and the use of LLSs play a significant role in language learning. Researchers need to devise appropriate strategies that would help instructors to motivate students and to train them to use strategies that would facilitate their language learning.

The researcher suggests that conducting additional studies may help in shedding light on other factors which could contribute into explaining the factors that affect strategies use; like the age of students, learning styles, class size, proficiency, attitude, culture and social classes. This will enable language teachers and researchers to draw more accurate and global picture of what is happening to an individual when he/she learns a foreign language.

5.5 Recommendations

After the analysis and discussion of the data, the researcher recommends the following:

- 1- Train teachers and faculty members on using different LLSs in teaching English.
- 2- Raise students' awareness of the importance of the LLSs that they use.
- 3- Teachers and faculty members can develop learning styles that are compatible with students' learning styles, and train their students to use the appropriate strategies.
- 4- Curriculum planners and English instructors should find more effective and efficient teaching strategies to help students in cooperative working in order to achieve better learning at schools and universities.
- 5- Conduct more research and workshops on LLSs.

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