Pattern of language learning strategies use by saudi arabian EFL learners

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Abstract

Language development and growth of skills for English as a Foreign Language is among the ways through which students are applying learning strategies across various concepts and proficiencies. There have been at least six main strategies that have been extensively used all across the world for the development and learning of a second language and include direct and indirect language learning strategies. The use of language learning strategies greatly differs from a country and a language. This study investigates the patterns of language learning strategies used for Arabian EFL learners particularly in the Saudi Arabian context. The study analyzes the type of strategy used and frequency used to form a pattern for Arabian EFL learners in EFL development particularly in Saudi Arabia. The study included a study that was conducted on a group of students who were EFL learners and placed in the Arabian context to test the research questions. The findings indicated that most learners were geared to follow the strategic learning of English as a Second Language mostly influenced by the motivational factors and other factors underlying the influence of strategic use. These findings also showed that cognitive strategies are highly preferred for the learning strategy followed by metacognitive and cognitive strategies. Some of the major strategies that were used by the students in the environment during learning include the use of memory functions and cognitive functions that boosted their understanding of various concepts of language. Females have also been shown to use strategies at a medium level with more focus on memory and metacognitive as compared to their counterparts. The study findings are significant in understanding the Arabian context of EFL and how different environmental factors affect the proper strategic use of learning concepts.

Keywords: Pattern, language, strategies, learners.

نمط من استراتيجيات تعلم اللغة المستخدمة من قبل متعلمي اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية في السعودية
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يعد تطوير اللغة ونمو مهارات اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية من بين الطرق التي يطبق الطلاب من خلالها استراتيجيات التعلم عبر مفاهيم وكفاءات مختلفة. كان هناك ما لا يقل عن ست استراتيجيات رئيسية تم استخدامها على نطاق واسع في جميع أنحاء العالم لتطوير وتعلم لغة ثانية وتشمل استراتيجيات تعلم اللغة المباشرة وغير المباشرة. يختلف استخدام استراتيجيات تعلم اللغة اختلافًا كبيرًا عن بلد ولغة. تبحث هذه الدراسة في أنماط استراتيجيات تعلم اللغة المستخدمة لمتعلمي اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية باللغة العربية خاصة في سياق المملكة العربية السعودية. تحلل الدراسة نوع الاستراتيجية المستخدمة والتكرار المستخدم لتشكيل نمط لمتعلمي اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية في تطوير اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية خاصة في المملكة العربية السعودية. اشتملت الدراسة على دراسة أجريت على مجموعة من الطلاب من متعلمي اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية ووضعوا في السياق العربي لاختبار أسئلة البحث. أشارت النتائج إلى أن معظم المتعلمين كانوا موجهين لمتابعة التعلم الاستراتيجي للغة الإنجليزية كلغة ثانية متأثرين في الغالب بالعوامل التحفيزية والعوامل الأخرى الكامنة وراء تأثير الاستخدام الاستراتيجي. أظهرت هذه النتائج أيضًا أن الاستراتيجيات المعرفية مفضلة بشكل كبير

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لاستراتيجية التعلم التي تتبعها استراتيجيات ما وراء المعرفية والمعرفية. تتضمن بعض الاستراتيجيات الرئيسية التي استخدمها الطلاب في البيئة أثناء التعلم استخدام وظائف الذاكرة والوظائف المعرفية التي عززت فهمهم لمختلف مفاهيم اللغة. كما ثبت أن الإناث يستخدمن استراتيجيات على مستوى متوسط مع التركيز بشكل أكبر على الذاكرة وما وراء الإدراك مقارنة بنظرائهن. تعتبر نتائج الدراسة مهمة في فهم السياق العربي للغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية وكيف تؤثر العوامل البيئية المختلفة على الاستخدام الاستراتيجي السليم لمفاهيم التعلم.

الكلمات المفتاحية : نموذج ، استراتيجية،متعلمين،اللغة.

Introduction

The development of language and other uses of language effectively to express oneself is amongst one of the critical aspects of early learners especially in Saudi Arabia. Learners who are in "English as a Foreign Language" program often require a more strategic approach to addressing issues regarding their language development and skills for better outcomes and learning curves. To achieve this, the frequency of using strategic learning and the type of strategies used can generally influence the development of EFL learners in Saudi Arabia, especially where the language is not a native one. This gap in knowledge has been acknowledged by the Oxford strategies inventory of language learning (SILL) which seeks to understand the relationship that exists between the various factors influencing the pattern and use of language learning strategies.There has been a lot of research that has been done for the last two decades aiming at language learning strategies that are used for better development of the second language that mainly shifts the teaching from instructional methods towards the more critical application of learner characteristics (Alhaisoni, 2012). A language learning strategy can be defined as " an operational action, step, technique or strategic move to be adopted by the learner to enhance his/ her motivation level towards learning a second language and to make possible an easier, more enjoyable, faster, more effective, more self-directed and more transferable use of learned words to the new situation (Radwan, 2011). Various questions have been raised concerning the types of learning strategies and their pattern of use of these strategies that yield better outcomes for which various factors are investigated. According to Oxford (1990), there have been at least six main strategies that have been extensively used all across the world for the development and learning of a second language. These strategies include direct and indirect language learning strategies.

In direct language learning strategies, three main components usually make up the approach and include cognitive, compensation, and memory strategies that are used to make associations of learned words to new situations that learners interact with (Grenfell, 2014). Indirect language learning strategies are however comprised of affective,

metacognitive, and social strategies that mainly give the student a center focus. These learning strategies have also been adapted by Arabian EFL learners in Saudi Arabia and other Arabian countries intensely because of their enhanced level of success for language development. The use of language learning strategies greatly differs from country to country and language to language that is mainly influenced by various factors (Moskovsky, 2013). Ardasheva et al., (2017) explains that the two main factors that have been constantly connected to the specific use of the strategy include the type of strategy and frequency of use. These two factors are considered to greatly influence the LLS patterns that are used to learn English as a foreign language. Various studies in the past have investigated various factors that influence the use of various strategies including motivation, gender, educational level, aspiration level, utilitarian perspective, language acquisition principles, and experience in learning a second language. These factors have been shown to affect the type of strategy used as well as its application and frequency of using the strategies during the entire learning process (Alhaqbani, 2012). Other additional factors that are considered to mold the pattern of LLSs use in the Arabian context include nationality, sex, age, learning style, degree of awareness, traits, learning context, and language proficiency. These factors are very critical in the development of language and impact the type and frequency of learning strategy use described by oxford which eventually forms the pattern of LLS use to learn a second language. Multiple studies have been conducted to examine these factors. For instance, Ardasheva et al., (2017) studied the relationship between language and self-regulated learning based on factors such as education level, script differences among others. In the study, they observed that most of these factors affected learning hence the need to put emphasis on each of the factors.

This study investigates the patterns of language learning strategies used for Arabian EFL learners particularly in the Saudi Arabian context. The study shall determine the type of strategy used and frequency used to form a pattern for Arabian EFL learners in EFL development particularly in Saudi Arabia. The study analyzes the impact of these especially in the literature review as have been done in other various studies (Ismail, 2013).

Literature Review

According to Oxford's (1990) strategy inventory of language learning (SILL), there exist at least fifty strategies that are further categorized into six categories that encompass direct and indirect language

learning strategies that are used to enhance the learning environment and language proficiency for a better outcome (Ahmed, 2015). Various studies have been conducted with very different demographics of participants belonging to different countries and learning different languages that are further placed under different contexts to use Oxford's framework. The aims of these studies have attempted to gauge the results that are achieved by the use of the learning strategies by deriving the frequencies and types of strategies that are used by learners in the specific EFL context. Many studies have shown that there is a significant effect that the specific patterns and language learning activities outcomes often influence the general outcome of EFL learners (Bailey, 2014). The results show that factors such as the nationality of the learner and the background of the learner are considered as very critical factors that have a significant influence on the selection and frequency of language learning strategies for use.

Various researchers have conducted extensive studies in Saudi that included Arabian EFL learners in south East Asia that have identified various aspects of learning and strategies used with their effectiveness. The cultural aspect was considered as one of the significant factors that differentiated between Saudi Arabian learners from those of other countries in Asia. Additionally, more research findings have shown that most institutions utilized the strategy inventory of language learning as the basic instrument of data collection that was used to formulate the research questions (Alhaysony, 2012). The Oxford organization has suggested the use of an approach that is made up of three major components including low, medium, and high levels for each strategy. These levels are used to define the frequency of the learning strategy used in a particular situation considering a specific perspective of each strategy separately. Additionally, Oxford (1990) describes the frequencies used to describe the different levels are set at a mean of 2.4 or lower to categorize the low level of strategy use and a mean ranging from 2.5 to 3.4 describing the medium level of strategy use in all contexts around the world. To describe the high level of strategy use, a mean ranging from 3.5 to 5 is advised by the organization. Studies that have been developed after the Oxford scales generalize the results to all contexts to enable a uniform outcome and analysis of the underlying strategies (Elyas, 2015). An example of this scale use was conducted in a Japanese university to find the pattern of the strategy used by EFL learners. According to the results obtained and the

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Oxford scale, it has found most Japanese institutions used the medium strategy to effective learning for EFLs.

In the institution, the study showed that memory and cognitive strategies were more pronounced as compared to other strategies while on the other hand, effective and metacognitive strategies were less common (Alhaisoni, 2012). These findings can be attributed to the normal Japanese setting where there is a smaller use of social strategies. The study also further connects the findings to the nationality and cultural impact that it has on the final choice of the strategic plan and affects language learning strategy use for EFL learners.

Moreover, Park (1997) conducted a study to investigate the specific strategy that is used by Korean students in a Korean university which showed that students in the university were medium strategy users in overall terms according to the Oxford scale and mode of learning. A closer analysis of the specific medium level strategies used showed that the metacognitive strategies were found to have the highest frequency and selection by the Korean students while cognitive, compensation, affective, memory, and social strategy were found as additional factors influencing the existing strategies. Other studies that have been carried out on the school level EFL learners in the Korean context found that the compensation strategy was used at a medium level which gives it the highest frequency of strategic use (Al-Mahrooqi, 2012).

Similarly, a study conducted in an Italian university that included more than 200 participants showed that the metacognitive strategies were most commonly used and were significantly used and preferred by many Italian students (Jafari, 2012). Other learning strategies were described as the low to medium levels and therefore categorizing the participants as medium strategy users. The use of social, memory, affective, cognitive, and metacognitive strategies was significantly lower. The use of the medium level strategies is therefore very common and more studies including Merrifield in 1996 examine the use of this specific strategy by EFL learners which targeted the views of five adult EFL learners. Perhaps the learning strategy at a medium level with compensation strategy is one of the most frequently used strategies across many learning institutions across the world for students with different needs and cultural backgrounds (Javid, 2012).

The effective strategy for learning is considered as one of the least commonly used strategies at a low level for EFL learners. A study

conducted on EFL students in Hong Kong found that metacognitive and compensations were being used more frequently and were regarded as having a higher level according to the universal scale of strategic EFL use while memory and affective strategies were used at significantly lower frequencies. Overall, the strategic approach to learning was at the medium level by EFL learners. More studies have even gone further to link these issues and shown the relationship between the language learning strategies and communication strategies that have been devised to enhance the outcome of learning strategies and language proficiency (Al-Musawi, 2014). According to Tarone (1981), the relationship is somewhat problematic and has contributed to the decline in the use of learning strategies more effectively. However, the study suggests that a great number of students in Taiwan have still attempted to collaborate while using the communication strategy to improve their learning and employ strategic learning at a medium level along with memory and effective strategies.

Alddin (2015) describes the strategic use of different learning patterns through the selection of the type of strategy and frequency used, including the use of other factors that shape the patterns that affect learning theories. These theories include those that are related to linguistics and psychological approaches that are constructed from behaviorism to mental positions and psychological empiricism. The theories have helped various researchers in finding the ideal strategies for their use by EFL learners in various countries and amongst various educational settings. The first theoretical approach that is employed toward forming a language learning strategy for EFL learners use is using the behaviorism approach which collects data from psychological issues that are based on stimulus-response model (Hammond, 2012).

The use of negative and positive reinforcement techniques to gauge any fluctuation in the selection or frequency of early language learning using strategic approaches has been proposed as a possible way to identify the appropriate learning techniques for EFL learners (Walker, 1975). In the study, it was found that the application of the behavioral approach in the classroom context can fluctuate based on the strategy used by EFL learners. It was further found that students who used cognitive strategies before the implementation of behavioral techniques preferred to use metacognitive and social strategies afterward in their study (Liton, 2012).

These strategies can then be referred to as the medium level by the students.

Another study was carried out on 678 students learning French, Japanese and German language in a university in Singapore and who were categorized as bilingual students. The findings of the study showed that the most common strategy use was at a medium level by most of the students. The use of social strategies was found to be the highest frequency while the affective strategies are significantly lower. Similar results have been found in another study by Peacock (2003) in the case of European universities as the study took into account 1006 participants. The study elaborated on the medium level use of strategy for learning where compensation strategy was rated highest and metacognitive factors while the cognitive strategies were found to be the least frequently used.

Studies that have been conducted in the Arabian context have also found similar findings, which have shown that the use of language learning strategies among Arabian students and EFL learners was frequently at the medium level (Elyas, 2015). A study conducted in Palestine which considered Arabian students seeking to learn English found the students were moderately using learning strategies. However, in the Arabian context, the metacognitive strategy was found to be the most commonly and frequently used strategy while compensation strategy was the least frequently used strategy. The main factors which affected the selection of strategy and frequency of the study included nationality, culture, and motivation to learn a second language among the Arab students (Alhaysony, 2012). Additionally, impacting factors included gender and experience which mediated the learning of a second language among Saudi Arabian students and EFL learners. The culture was shown to impact the final selection of the strategy as social and communicative strategies specifically in the regions and institutes where people are more extroverted culturally and mixed up without racist and religious beliefs (Aladdin et al., 2015).

Oxford's taxonomy of language learning strategies has been used and generalized over various contexts around the globe (Alhaysony, 2012). These studies have taken into account participants from Korea, Singapore, China, and Japan, Palestine, Saudi Arabia, Iran, Jordan, and Hong Kong. From most of these studies, it has been found that the majority of the studies conclude that EFL learners tend to use the learning strategy at a medium level. One of the most defining factors contributing to the large

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preference of this level is the presence of motivation factors. It can be concluded that Arabian students are moderately motivated to learn English as a second language until they are challenged with a situation that requires direct use of skills with native English-speaking participants or seeking education in English speaking countries (Elyas, 2015).

Hence, from these findings, it can be concluded that Saudi Arabians are less likely to learn a second language and therefore tend to moderately apply effective language learning strategies during the learning process. Moreover, the students did not show a high interest in group learning or seeking information in the form of a group. Another defining characteristic of EFL learning strategies in the country is the learning style which in the case of East Asian countries is the concrete-sequential learning style (Aladdin et al, 2015). Students tend to learn according to the instructor's teaching and follow the guidelines exactly as taught instead of improvising on other techniques. Students demand full information and focus on presentation and teaching and prefer the language learning techniques and materials to be applied linearly and correctly.

In another study by Oxford and Ehrman (2012), a great number of students who were learning English as a second language were studied and various learning strategies that inform future research were found. The study developed a questionnaire that contained more than eighty items that were administered to fifty-seven English language learners. In the findings of the study, many students were only using strategies at the medium level either to help them out or enhance their learning level and language proficiency to become better and proficient in the language (Elyas, 2015). Additionally, there have been many studies such as Sardegna, Lee, & Kusey, (2018) and also Krarunpetch, & Swatevacharkul (2018) that have found a significant relationship between language proficiency and the use of language learning strategies which has caused the rise in the use of other research-based strategies along with increased frequency across the world. For instance, Krarunpetch, & Swatevacharkul (2018) conducted a study in Thailand. In doing this, they attempted to investigate if there existed a relationship between language proficiency and the use of language learning strategies. In this, the authors found that there existed some positive link between the two aspects. Many other studies have explored various instruments and variables which have a serious effect on strategy use and change the pattern of LLSs use. Studies have argued that there exists a significant variation in the preference

of strategy use and type which are influenced mainly by the proficiency difference or gender (Aladdin et al, 2015).

From the discussed literature, it has been found that the pattern of language learning strategies that is accomplished by the use and frequency of selected strategies has greater effects of proficiency and gender. The level was further found to be moderately affected by gender and greatly affected by language proficiency. It was further found that females are more likely to use language strategies with social and metacognitive strategies than their male counterparts. According to Oxford (1995), females are more inclined towards using learning strategies and apply them during the learning process. Another factor discussed across the literature is that of gender which has also been shown to be significant such as the studies in the university of Taiwan that found it has played a major role in devising the pattern for language learning and the use of learning strategies. The females who use more social strategies and communicative strategies lead to an overall better input and conversational strategy.

Females have also been shown to use strategies at a medium level with more focus on memory and metacognitive as compared to their counterparts. Gender differences are reflected in the use of strategy type and frequency with females more likely to use social learning strategies. Gender differences are more evident in the utilization of socially based strategies such as classroom learning or group learning. The specific strategy use is affected by the culture or context of the learners in their native environments (Elyas, 2015). For instance, a study was conducted on the adult Vietnamese refugees and found that males are more likely to accept and use learning strategies to benefit their learning than females who had less frequent use and application of strategies in their learning environment. This study results were showing disparities with the previous study findings of the role of gender and language proficiency. Utilitarian concepts also affect the shaping of the pattern of learning language strategy for English as a second language (Mahmood, 2012).

Saudi Arabian EFL learners showed that cognitive strategies have become necessary for learning a new language. More than three hundred students were contacted and a questionnaire containing over twenty items was administered to evaluate this study. Cognitive strategies were being used highly with a mean greater than 3.5 and strategies used for the improvement of English grammar had a mean of 3.4 (Javid, 2012).

Cognitive strategies were found to be the most popular among the students and language learners. Metacognitive strategies were found to be the second factor that is most frequently used among all other strategies. Other patterns that were discovered in this study regarding the language learning strategies used by Saudi Arabian students indicated that the learner preferred to plan their time and stick to a schedule for English language study. Only within that specific time, that they were likely to use language strategy at a medium level while in other situations use of language strategy was low (Elyas, 2015).

In another study, comprising of 21 students from Jordan, Khawaldeh (2018) investigated whether there was a relationship between (Substitute, Combine, Adapt, Modify, Put to another use , Eliminate, and Reverse) SCAMPER and CORT (Cognitive Research Trust). In the study, Khawaldeh found that there was no significant effect of SCAMPER AND CORT on the creativity and congnition of students. Additionally, Khawaldeh (2018) argues that self-monitoring and efficient planning of learners' progress and strategy selection is considered as the instruments in achieving this specific goal. It has also been observed during this study that the improvement in the academic performance of Saudi Arabian students and metacognitive knowledge are complementary to each other. The high frequency of use of metacognitive strategies and cognitive strategies ensures that these strategies play a significant role in making successful language learning in case of learning a second language.

In the literature, there is a large amount of evidence that Saudi Arabian students and EFL learners are more inclined towards using cognitive and metacognitive strategies at a higher frequency than others and the results are very consistent with previous findings and studies (Javid, 2012). More studies also confirmed the findings of the use of the various strategies of learning among Arab students. A greater emphasis on the level of use was critical to consider as it played a role in deciding what the majority of researchers have analyzed in terms of the use of strategies for learning at the medium level by Arab students. Social strategies that involve interaction and conversational strategies are also common in Arab learners by majorly in females (Aladdin et al, 2015). The intense learning environment for EFL and ELP plays a major role in the selection and use of social strategies for the preparatory year.

Research Method
Participants

127 participants were successfully considered for the study that included 90 males and 37 females. There was a significant imbalance in the gender distribution of the participants selected for the study. The main aim of the study which the participants were subjected was to assess the patterns of language learning by Saudi Arabian ELF learners. For this research, demographic factors that were considered and recorded include gender, grades, and years of study (How many years they have studied). The data collected was then analyzed using SPSS (Statistical package for social scientist) software for more accurate results.

Instrument

The research was organized into 50 specific prompt items representing 50 different strategies as proposed by Oxford for the different learning languages. The main tool used for conducting the research was issuing questionnaires in which responses were required for each prompt. The questionnaire was based on a qualitative design approach that adopted the use of a satisfaction scale and quantified responses by assigning specific codes to each prompt. The questionnaire was designed in a way that captured the demographic background of the participants on for the first section and the following prompts having a link to the specific strategies that are used for language learning. This questionnaire generally used the Likert scale to capture details that captured the preference of the participants towards engaging with the different strategies. Some prompts in the study in the form of numerical values were used and recorded the degree of their preferences of the subjects towards the items in the questionnaire, with five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 ("never or almost never true of me") to 5 ("always, or almost always true of me."). Additionally, there were proficiency levels regarding the language identified as A, B, C, D, and F. The reliability of the questionnaire was also tested using the Cronbach's alpha for a more accurate and effective questionnaire. The Cronbach alpha for this data set was 0.963 which is above the recommended value and that the data collected from different participants were quite reliable. Furthermore, six learning strategies are defined in the questionnaire. First, Memory strategies are considered for storing and retrieving information, Cognitive Strategies for understanding and producing the language, compensation strategy for overcoming limitations in language learning, the purpose of

metacognitive strategy for planning and monitoring learning, affective strategy for controlling emotions, motivation, and the social strategies for cooperating with others in language learning. These strategies were organized specifically in that each strategy contains several items against its items. These strategies include 1) Memory which contains nine items (1-9) 2) Cognitive contains 14 items (10-23), 3) Compensation has six items (24-29), 4) Metacognitive contains nine items (30-38), 5) Affective contains six items (39-44) and 6) Social has six items (45-50). Students' views were recorded based on this questionnaire and analyzed the pattern of ELF learners.

Results and Discussions

Results from over all analysis are: In the descriptive analysis we can see that average value "3.763"of cognitive strategy is higher than all other strategies used by 127 participants and lowest mean value "3.60" is of affective strategy. Standard deviation of strategies is showing the variation of observation from their mean value. As we can see here that overall strategies has minimum of variation i.e. 0.63 which is quite low variation and among these strategies we can see that compensation strategy has minimum variation "0.56" which means for this strategy users observations are varying little bit. And for highest standard deviation we can see affective strategy while all strategies descriptive are lying between. For better analysis and to know about the most preferred strategy we assigned ranks with respect to their means. By assigning ranks we came to know that memory strategy "I think of relationships between what I already know and new things I learn in English" is the most preferred strategy relative to their means and memory strategy "I review English lessons often" is the least preferred strategy relative to their means. Then an ANOVA (analysis of variance) is used to check the variation among their means . For this purpose we used MINITAB and we did not keep any demographic variable as factor. So this ANOVA checks the variation for 50 strategies which was later converted into 6 major strategies: cognitive, metacognitive, social, affective, memory and compensation. Results drawn from ANOVA (analysis of variance) shows that p value calculated from ANOVA is higher than our desired level of significance i.e. 0.05 which means there is no significant difference between these 50 applied strategies.

Table 1

Strategy	Mean	Std. Deviation
Social	3.6142	.71322
Affective	3.6063	.72547
Metacognitive	3.7323	.58349
Compensation	3.6535	.56874
Cognitive	3.7638	.58359
Memory	3.7244	.61305
Overall strategy	3.68	0.63

The above table shows the descriptive of strategy categories. These are the categories of strategies in which each category contain a bunch of strategies. So the descriptive of above strategies are not representing single strategy. In fact these descriptive shows a mean and standard deviation of bunch of strategies.

For overall strategy descriptive see (Table 1). The table shows that overall strategy mean is 3.68 which is an average value of overall strategies while it variation by amount 0.63 which is quite low variation in any data set and it has individual strategy descriptive too. (M= 3.61, S.D = 0.713), Affective (M= 3.60, S.D = 0.72), Metacognitive (M= 3.73, S.D = 0.58), Compensation (M= 3.63, S.D =0.56), Cognitive (M= 3.76, S.D = 0.58) and Memory (M= 3.72, S.D = 0.613). From this analysis we can observe that on average overall strategy mean is low or sometimes it is equal to some strategies but it does not exceed. It can be seen that cognitive strategy has high mean than other strategies adopted by students for language learning. When comes to standard deviation affective strategy has much variation than other strategies and compensation strategy has minimum variation than other strategies which is measured by standard deviation. The above standard deviation shows the variation from their mean value. From this descriptive analysis we can see that cognitive, Metacognitive and memory strategy has significant variation from affective and social strategy with respect to mean. Social and effective strategy has significant variation from four other strategies with respect to standard deviation as social and affective strategy has high standard deviation while four other strategies have quite low standard deviation in comparison with those two strategies. One more thing we can see in the above descriptive table is that affective strategy is followed by social strategy as their means are quite same "3.60

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and 3.61" while their standard deviation are following same patterns 0.713 and 0.72 respectively. This analysis employed that cognitive is highly preferred strategy then Metacognitive and finally cognitive, the reason behind this scenario might be these three categories were the highly used strategies by the Iranian EFL learners might be the fact that Iran is an EFL context and learners do not have much exposure to their target language. The fact is that because of this lack exposure of the target language, they do not have frequent chances to unconsciously pick up the target language. For compensating this deficiency they kept these three strategies category at high preference level. Moreover, in most English classes, in schools, university, or even language institutes, students are emphasized to improve their explaining power about their and making them conscious of the process of learning language even in cases where the communicative approach is adopted.

Table 2
Ten Most Frequently Used Strategies

Rank	Mean	Strategies
1st	4.25	I think of relationships between what I already know and new things I
2nd	4.18	learn in English
3rd	4.18	I use new English words in a sentence so I can remember them
4th	4.16	I use the English words I know in different ways
5th	4.14	I try to find as many ways as I can to use my English
6th	4.14	I ask for help from English speakers
7th	4.13	I try to relax whenever I am afraid of using English
8th	4.11	I ask for English speakers to correct me when I talk
9th	4.09	I make up new words if I do not know the right ones in English
10th	4.09	I try to find out how to be better and more effective learner of English to understand unfamiliar words in English I make guesses

Table 3
Ten least frequently used strategies

Rank	Mean	Strategies
50	3.93	I write notes, message, letters or reports in English partially
49	3.92	I read English without looking up new word
48	3.92	I practice English with other students
47	3.91	I make summaries of information that I hear or read in English
46	3.89	I first skim an English passage (read over the passage quickly) then go back and read carefully
45	3.88	I have clear goals for improving my English
44	3.88	I plan my schedule so I will have enough time to study
43	3.88	I use flashcards to remember new English words
42	3.86	I write down my feelings in English language learning diary
41	3.78	I review English lessons often

In table 2 and 3 we have mentioned the top ten most and least frequently used strategies with their ranks with respect to their means. Out of the ten most frequently used strategies there is no such strategy from which maximum number of frequently used strategies belong. Similarly for the least ten frequently used strategies there is no such specific strategy from which maximum number of least used strategies belong. From the most frequently used strategies "I use new English words in a sentence so I can remember them" and   "I use the English words I know in different ways" have same mean "4.18". On the same nodes. "I ask for help from English speakers", "I try to relax whenever I am afraid of using English" have same mean among the most frequently used strategies " 4.14". Strategies "I try to find out how to be better and more effective learner of English" and "To understand unfamiliar words in English I make guesses" have same means too "4.09". From these results we can say that as their means are the same so it might be because of students think that usage of these pairs of equal means can provide them equal satisfaction. Similarly we have made a list for ten least frequently used strategies by 127 participants. These are the strategies to which students consider the least beneficial for their language learning. In the least ten frequently used strategies: "I read English without looking up new word" and "I practice English with other students" have same mean "3.92". In a similar way strategy "I have clear goals for improving my English", "I plan my schedule so I will have enough time to study" and "I

use flashcards to remember new English words" have same average value "3.88". When we see the strategies whose average values are same then when we draw a conclusion that these strategies are equally least efficient for 127 participants of this survey.

The results are presented in a way that that highest rank is assigned to strategy whose mean Is higher than other strategies and similarly lowest rank is assigned to strategy whose mean value is lower than other strategies. The most preferred strategy is memory "I think of relationships between what I already know and new things I learn in English" (M=4.25) and the least preferred strategy is memory "I review English lessons often" (M=3.78). On the same node all strategies have been written with their preference level. Some of the strategies has same mean so their ranks are same. There is no such specific strategy which have been used most and belongs to single strategy. The most least preferred strategy was " I review English lessons" which means student so don'sa,mt like to review their lessons again to make their language strong. Strategy social "If I don't understand something in English ask the other person to slow down or say it again", strategy affective "I encourage myself to speak English even when I am afraid of making a mistake", strategy memory "I remember a new English word by making a mental picture of situation in which word might be used" , Metacognitive "I pay attention when someone is speaking English" has same preference level with reference to their mean (M=4.07) which means students prefer these all strategies equally. Social strategy "I ask for help from English speakers" and Affective strategy "I try to relax whenever I feel afraid of using English", has same preference level with (M=4.14). Similarly, social strategy "I practice English with other students", "I ask questions for clarification in English" has same preference level with (M=3.92). Memory strategy "I use new English words in a sentence so I can remember them" , Metacognitive strategy "I notice my English mistakes and use that information to help me" and cognitive strategy "I use the English words I know in different ways" has equal preference level with reference to their mean (M= 4.18). Memory strategy "I use rhymes to remember new English words (e.g., I see a "cat" on a "mat"), "I remember new English words or phrases by remembering their location on the page, on the board, or on a street sign", affective strategy "I notice if I am tense or nervous when I am studying or using English", compensation strategy "If I can't think of an English word, I use a word or phrase that means the same thing", cognitive

"I read for pleasure in English", "I try to find patterns in English" , "I try not to translate word-for-word" are equally preferred strategies (M=3.96). Metacognitive "I try to find out how to be a better and more effective learner of English" , compensation strategy "To understand unfamiliar English words, I make guesses" has same preference level (M=4.09).

Table 4

ANOVA Results for the Difference between Means of the 50 Strategies

Sources	Sum of square	Df	Mean square	F	Sig
Between groups	57.57	48	1.20	1.06	0.362
Within groups	698.50		1.13		
Total					

P<0.05

To check the variation between means of 50 strategies adopted by 127 students we used ANOVA (Analysis of variance). In the null hypothesis we define that there is no significance difference between means and in the alternative we define there is a significance difference between means. Output of ANOVA (Analysis of variance) is for overall strategies used by participants. By using our statistical knowledge we can see that significance value is 0.36 which is quite larger than our desired level of significance level and these results lead us to non rejection of null hypothesis. Thus, we conclude that there is no significant difference between the variation of the means of these 50 strategies used by 127 participants. This means these adopted strategies has no variation with reference to their means.

In order to find where the difference lies we used ANOVA (analysis of variance) on all 50 strategies then 22, 25, 40, 41 strategies shows a significant difference as their p values are lower than the desired level of significance so we can conclude that these strategies have shown a significant difference from all other strategies used by 127 participants. Strategy 22 belongs to cognitive "I try not to translate word-for-word" (M=3.96) has smaller significant variation in comparison with other strategies , strategy 25 belongs to compensation "When I can't think of a word during a conversation in English, I use gestures" (M=3.98) has significant variation in comparison with all other strategies while we can see that there is no significant difference among these two strategies 22 and 25 relative to their means. Strategies 40 an41 belongs from affective

strategy where strategy 40 "I encourage myself to speak English even when I am afraid of making a mistake" (M= 4.07). Strategy 41 "I give myself a reward or treat when I do well in English" (M= 3.95). When we see these two strategies 40 and 41, means of these two strategies shows a significant strategies. When we see the ranks of these 4 strategies they are not lying in the highly preferred and lowly preferred strategies, they are lying among the middle with respect to their means. As these 4 strategies having significant variation because their p values are lower than our desired level of significance, these four strategies belongs to three different categories: affective, compensation and cognitive. When we see towards the descriptive of these three strategies then we can see that affective strategy is dominating these three strategies with respect to their means and by seeing standard deviations we can see that affective is again dominating these strategies with respect to their standard deviation.

Conclusion

The study findings have revealed several issues regarding the use and employment of strategic learning for EFL learners in the Saudi Arabian context. Most learners were geared to follow the strategic learning of English as a Second Language mostly influenced by the motivational factors and other factors underlying the influence of strategic use. These findings showed that cognitive strategies are highly preferred for the learning strategy followed by metacognitive and cognitive strategies. This can be explained by the fact that Iranian EFL learners in an EFL context and learners may not have much exposure to their target language. The findings also show that more learners are very cautious of their environment when it comes to learning the new language in the new environment which is influenced by several factors including cultural contexts.

More conclusive research from the table shows that students employ various strategies among the Arabian context of learners where they employed strategies that can suit their learning styles and achievements in the learning process. Some of the major strategies that were used by the students in the environment during learning include the use of memory functions and cognitive functions that boosted their understanding of various concepts of language. Females have also been shown to use strategies at a medium level with more focus on memory and metacognitive as compared to their counterparts. Gender differences are reflected in the use of strategy type and frequency with females more

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likely to use social learning strategies. These findings are therefore conclusive to Arabian students who prefer to approach the learning of concepts and memorization through the various components of language hence influencing the overall strategy used by the EFL student.

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