UNIVERSITI PUTRA MALAYSIA

TERTIARY STUDENTS' LANGUAGE LEARNING STRATEGIES IN AN ONLINE ENGLISH WRITING COURSE

HAN AI LEEN @ AN AI LEEN

FBMK 2000 4

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**Thesis Submitted in Fulfilment of the Requirements for the
Degree of Master of Arts in the Faculty of
Modern Languages and Communication
Universiti Putra Malaysia**

April 2000

To the Extension of Knowledge

Abstract of thesis presented to the Senate of Universiti Putra Malaysia in fulfilment of the requirements for the Degree of Master of Arts

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Chairperson : Dr. Mohd. Faiz Abdullah

Faculty : Faculty of Modern Languages and Communication

Technology is an important aspect in today's modern world and its application is now being tested and investigated in the field of learning and teaching. In an online environment, the student is not a passive respondent but one who can employ specific strategies to effectively evaluate, integrate, analyze and retain new material.

The purpose of the present study was to investigate the use of language learning strategies (namely cognitive, metacognitive and socioaffective strategies) by students in an online writing course, based on O'Malley et al. (1985a and 1985b) and Chamot and Kupper (1989) taxonomies from a classroom context. The study also sought to suggest a modified taxonomy of language learning strategies that reflects what a student can apply in an online environment to facilitate the process

of language learning and to produce a general learning profile of online English language learners. Therefore, the study adopted an ethnographic approach to observe and investigate participants in order to obtain a more holistic and in-depth analysis of strategy use. Eleven Universiti Putra Malaysia (UPM) students participated in the project. The data consisted largely of strategy checklists, journal entries and audiotaped interviews with the students.

The study found that students do, consciously and unconsciously, use language learning strategies in the hypertext environment. The findings also suggested two new strategies appropriate for both online and traditional classroom learning. These were repetition for reinforcement in the metacognitive strategy group and the community strategy that further expands the definition of cooperation in the socio-affective group. It was also found that there was a high overlap between the features in the list compiled from the studies of O'Malley et al. (1985a and 1985b) and Chamot and Kupper (1989) taxonomies and the list generated from the study. The comparison of general learning profiles of the successful and less successful online learner gave insights to changes in comprehension levels and learning perceptions during the three months.

Hence, despite the change of teaching medium and course presentation, students adapted themselves for effective online learning. While learning in an online environment poses no major learning difficulties, other issues such as Internet accessibility, computer and Internet literacy, and problems in using the think-aloud method in this new medium were found to be potential setbacks in this supplementary educational medium.

Abstrak tesis yang dikemukakan kepada Senat Universiti Putra Malaysia sebagai
memenuhi keperluan untuk ijazah Master Sastera

PENGGUNAAN STRATEGI PEMBELAJARAN BAHASA PELAJAR SARJANA MUDA DALAM KURSUS MENULIS TALIAN TERUS BAHASA INGGERIS

Oleh

HAN AI LEEN @ AN AI LEEN

April 2000

Pengerusi   :   Dr. Mohd. Faiz Abdullah

Fakulti   :   Fakulti Bahasa Moden dan Komunikasi

Teknologi adalah suatu aspek penting dalam dunia moden hari ini dan
aplikasinya kini diuji and dikaji dalam bidang pemelajaran dan pengajaran. Dalam
suasana talian terus, pelajar bukan lagi merupakan peserta pasif tetapi individu yang
boleh menggunakan minda untuk memilih strategi tertentu untuk menilai,
menghurai dan menyimpan maklumat baru.

Tujuan tesis ini adalah untuk mengkaji penggunaan strategi pemelajaran
bahasa (khususnya, strategi kognitif, metakognitif dan socio-afektif) yang
digunakan oleh para pelajar dalam kursus menulis talian terus bahasa Inggeris,
berdasarkan taxonomi strategi bahasa O'Malley et al. (1985a dan 1985b) dan
Chamot dan Kupper (1989) dari konteks bilik darjah tradisional. Kajian ini juga
bertujuan untuk mencadangkan suatu taxonomi strategi pemelajaran bahasa yang

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membayangkan strategi yang boleh digunakan oleh pelajar dalam suasana talian terus untuk membantu proses pemelajaran bahasa serta menghasilkan suatu profil pemelajaran am pelajar bagi bahasa Inggeris secara kursus talian terus. Oleh yang demikian, kajian ini telah menggunakan cara etnografi untuk mengkaji para peserta bagi mendapatkan huraian dan analisis yang lebih mendalam. Sebelas pelajar sarjana muda Universiti Putra Malaysia (UPM) telah menyertai projek tersebut. Data kajian terdiri daripada senarai strategi, catatan jurnal dan rakaman audio temuduga dengan para peserta.

Hasil kajian menunjukkan bahawa para pelajar memang menggunakan pelbagai strategi pemelajaran bahasa dalam suasana hyperteks samada perkara ini dilakukan secara sedar ataupun tidak. Kajian ini telah mencadangkan dua strategi baru yang sesuai bagi kedua-dua suasana talian terus dan bilik darjah tradisional bagi pemelajaran bahasa. Strategi tersebut adalah pengulangan untuk pengukuhan dalam kumpulan strategi metakognitif dan strategi komuniti yang mengembangkan definisi strategi kerjasama dalam kumpulan socio-afektif.

Terdapat suatu darjah persamaan yang tinggi antara senarai yang menyatukan kajian O'Malley et al. (1985a dan 1985b) dan Chamot dan Kupper (1989) dengan senarai yang dihasilkan daripada kajian ini. Profil pemelajaran antara pelajar suasana talian terus yang berjaya dan pelajar yang kurang berjaya memberi pemahaman tentang perubahan dalam tahap kefahaman serta persepsi pemelajaran dalam tempoh tiga bulan. Maka, hasil kajian menunjukkan bahawa walaupun penggunaan media pengajaran dan presentasi kursus berbeza, namun para pelajar masih dapat mengubahsuai diri mereka untuk proses pemelajaran yang efektif.

Walaupun proses pemelajaran dalam suasana talian terus tidak mendatangkan sebarang masalah, isu-isu lain seperti pengaksesan Internet; celik komputer dan Internet dan masalah menggunakan cara "think-aloud" dalam media ini didapati berpotensi menghalang kajian dan penggunaan media pendidikan ini.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I have been very fortunate in having a supportive supervisory committee. Like the subject that is the focus of this thesis, I found cognition, socio-affection and metacognition in my supervisors.

Dr. Mohd. Faiz Abdullah was the cognition of this thesis. He constantly provided suggestions to improve the study by helping me make connections between what I planned to do and what I actually did. He was also the one helping me express what I wanted to and helping me form my voice in this study.

Ms Tan Bee Hoon was my supervisor for my first degree and now, as a valuable member. She was the socio-affection part of this thesis. She always took time to listen to my troubles, frustrations and never thought what I was doing was insignificant (it often feels that way when you have no direction). I would never have the confidence to do what I wanted if it was not for her. She has always been there for me.

Dr. Chan Swee Heng was the metacognition of this thesis. She critically and meticulously went through all my words, ideas and numerous drafts and always kept me focused on the big picture. With her, I learned to monitor my progress, my project and my numerous ideas. I will always appreciate her honesty and perceptiveness.

The list would not be complete if I do not take the opportunity to thank my father (An Chin Kwang) and my mother (Lim Meng Boi) for giving me the greatest time of my life. By giving me the opportunity to do my MA, they were also giving me a chance to mature and to be an independent individual. I only pray to have the chance to repay them for all that they have given me.

I also want to thank Lau Chai Kuan for his patience, for always supporting me and for telling me to never give up. He will always be a good friend of mine. I would also have to thank all my friends in the Faculty of Modern Languages and Communication Postgraduate Room who were there to calm me down and offer suggestions; my age-old friends who always found ways to make my mundane life more interesting and to all the lecturers who taught me the various papers. You have been a part of my life.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

CMC	Computer Mediated Communication
EFL	English as a Foreign Language
ESL	English as a Second Language
FMLC	Faculty of Modern Languages and Communication
GLL	Good Language Learner
HTML	Hyper Text Markup Language
HTTP	Hyper Text Transfer Protocol
L1	First Language
L2	Second Language
LASSI	Learning and Study Strategies Inventory
MBTI	Myers-Briggs Type Indicator
TC	Traditional Classroom
SILL	Strategy Inventory for Language Learning
UPM	Universiti Putra Malaysia
URL	Universal Resources Locators
VC	Virtual Classroom
WWW	World Wide Web
WYSIWYG	What You See Is What You Get

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This section presents the background to the study, identification of the research problem, the research questions, the purpose of the study, and the definition of key terms. Finally, the chapter sets the parameters for the findings by stating the conceptual framework and the assumptions and limitations.

Background to the Study

O'Malley, Chamot, Stewner-Manzanares, Kupper and Russo (1985a and 1985b) have researched on strategies used by students learning English as a second language. O'Malley et al. (1985a and 1985b) identified and clarified the confusion between learning strategies and other types of strategies, distinguished between metacognitive and cognitive strategies and investigated how strategies such as these were used with second language learning tasks or at different levels of language proficiency. The two studies (1985a and 1985b) have provided an improved understanding of learning strategy applications among individuals learning a second language. The first study (1985a) was a descriptive study that examined the range and type of strategies used with specific language tasks by beginning and intermediate ESL students. This study also identified the frequency of strategy use with language tasks. The second study (1985b) was designed to determine the effectiveness of learning strategy training with vocabulary, listening and speaking tasks in an academic setting for intermediate-level ESL students.

Using data collection instruments such as interview guides, O'Malley et al. (1985a and 1985b) collected data from both students and teachers on learning strategies occurring both within and outside the ESL classroom. Both studies listed eight metacognitive strategies, fourteen cognitive strategies and two socio-affective strategies (see Table 1). A more detailed comparison between the two taxonomies (1985a and 1985b) can be found in the Literature Review. A following study extended the purpose by investigating foreign language instruction and was a three-year project conducted from 1985-1988 (Chamot and Kupper, 1989). This study resulted in the taxonomy of strategies as in Table 2. In other words, the classification scheme developed for the ESL study (Table 1) was used and at the end of 1988, had been extended to foreign language instruction to provide a greater understanding of how language learning strategies are intricately involved in the process of second and foreign language learning.

At around the same time, there was another development in the teaching field. This new development took a completely different form involving, as it were, of technology and computers. According to Bonime and Pohlmann (1998), the Internet has been around since 1969, when the United States Department of Defense created a network of four computers in California and Utah that would be resistant to large-scale damage (such as a nuclear war). The early Internet was a relatively crude system for transmitting text and binary files (programmes) over telephone lines. Internet connections, users and traffic soon increased until the Internet became the largest computer network in the world, conveying thousands of applications and countless billions of bytes daily.

Table 1: O'Malley, Chamot, Stewner-Manzanares, Kupper and Russo (1985b)
Taxonomy of Language Learning Strategies.

CLASSIFICATIONS AND DEFINITIONS OF LANGUAGE LEARNING STRATEGIES	
A. COGNITIVE STRATEGIES	
Resourcing	Using target language reference materials such as dictionaries, encyclopedias or textbooks.
Repetition	Imitating a language model, including overt practice and silent rehearsal.
Grouping	Reordering or reclassifying, and perhaps labeling, the material to be learned, based on common attributes.
Deduction	Applying rules to understand or produce the second language or making up rules based on language analysis.
Imagery	Relating new information to visual concepts in memory via familiar, easily retrievable visualizations, phrases, or locations.
Auditory representation	Retention of the sound or similar sound for a word, phrase, or longer language sequence.
Keyword	Remembering a new word in the second language by: i. Identifying a familiar word in the first language that sounds like or otherwise resembles the new word; ii. Generating easily recalled images of some relationship with the first language and the new word in the second language.
Elaboration	Relating new information to other concepts in memory.
Transfer	Using previous acquired linguistic and/or conceptual knowledge to facilitate a new language learning task.
Inferencing	Using available information to guess meanings of new items, predict outcomes, or fill in missing information.
Note taking	Writing down the main idea, important points, outline, or summary of information presented orally or in writing.
Contextualization	Placing a word or phrase in a meaningful language sequence.
Recombination	Constructing a meaningful sentence or larger language sequence by combining known elements in a new way.
* Directed physical response	Using the first language as a base for understanding and/ or producing the second language.
Translation	Using the first language as a base for understanding and/ or producing the second language.
**Summarizing	Making a mental, oral, or written summary of new information gained through listening or reading.

B. METACOGNITIVE STRATEGIES	
Planning Advance organizers	Making a general but comprehensive preview of the organizing concept or principle in an anticipated learning activity.
Directed attention	Deciding in advance to attend in general to a learning task and to ignore irrelevant distractors.
**Functional planning	Planning for and rehearsing linguistic components necessary to carry out an upcoming language task.
Selective attention	Deciding in advance to attend to specific aspects of language input or situational details that will cue the retention of language input.
Delayed production	Consciously deciding to postpone speaking in order to learn initially through listening comprehension.
Self-management	Understanding the conditions that help one learn and arranging for the presence of those conditions.
*Self-reinforcement	Arranging rewards for oneself when a language learning activity has been accomplished successfully.
Monitoring Self-monitoring	Correcting one's speech for accuracy in pronunciation, grammar, vocabulary, or for appropriateness related to the setting or to the people who are present.
Evaluation Self-evaluation	Checking the outcomes of one's own language learning against an internal measure of completeness and accuracy.
C. SOCIO-AFFECTIVE STRATEGIES	
***Question for clarification	Asking a teacher or other native speaker for repetition, paraphrasing, explanation, and/or examples.
Cooperation	Working with one or more peers to obtain feedback, pool information, or model a language activity.

Adapted from: O'Malley, J. M. ; Chamot, A. U. ; Stewner-Manzanares, G. ; Kupper, L. and Russo, R. P. (1985b) Learning Strategy Applications with Students of English as a Second Language. *TESOL Quarterly.* 19(3): 557-584.

*   Included in O'Malley et al. 1985a
**   Excluded in O'Malley et al. 1985b
*** Included as a cognitive strategy in O'Malley et al. 1985a

Table 2: Chamot and Kupper (1989) Language Learning Strategy Taxonomy

CLASSIFICATIONS OF LANGUAGE LEARNING STRATEGIES	
A. COGNITIVE STRATEGIES	
Resourcing	Using available reference sources of information about the target language including dictionaries, textbooks, and prior work.
Repetition	Repeating a chunk of language (a word or phrase) in the course of performing a language task.
Grouping	Ordering, classifying or labeling material used in a language task based on common attributes; recalling information based on grouping previously done.
Deduction/ Induction	Consciously applying learned or self-developed rules to produce or understand the target language.
Substitution	Selecting alternative approaches, revised plans, or different words or phrases to accomplish a language task.
Summarization	Making a mental or written summary of language and information presented in a task.
Elaboration	Relating new information to prior knowledge; relating different parts of new information to each other; making meaningful personal associations to information presented. This has been coded in the think-aloud data in the following ways: a. *Personal* elaboration: Making judgments about or reacting personally to the material presented. b. *World* elaboration: Using knowledge gained from experience in the world. c. *Academic* elaboration: Using knowledge gained in academic situations. d. *Between parts* elaboration: Relating parts of the task to each other. e. *Questioning* elaboration: Using a combination of questions and world knowledge to brainstorm logical solutions to as task. f. *Self-evaluative* elaboration: Judging self in relation to materials. g. *Creative* elaboration: Making up a story line, or adopting a clever perspective. h. *Imagery:* Using a mental or actual pictures or visuals to represent information; coded as a separate category, but viewed as a form of elaboration.
Inferencing	Using available information to guess meanings of new items, predict outcomes, or fill in missing information.
Note taking	Writing down key words or concepts in abbreviated verbal, graphic or numerical form while listening or reading.
Transfer	Using previously acquired linguistic knowledge to facilitate a language task.
Translation	Using the first language as a base for understanding and/ or producing a second language.

B. METACOGNITIVE STRATEGIES	
Planning	Previewing the organizing concept or principle of an anticipated learning task (*advance organization*); proposing strategies for handling an upcoming task; generating a plan for the parts, sequence, main ideas, or language functions to be used in handling a task (*organizational planning*).
Directed attention	Deciding in advance to attend in general to a learning task and to ignore irrelevant distractors; maintaining attention during task execution.
Selective attention	Deciding in advance to attend to specific aspects of language input, often or situational details that assist in performance of a task; attending to specific aspects of language input during task execution.
Self-management	Understanding the conditions that help one successfully accomplish language tasks and arranging for the presence of those conditions; controlling one's language performance to maximize use of what is already known.
Self-monitoring	Checking, verifying, or correcting one's comprehension or performance in the course of a language task. This has been coded in the think-alouds in the following ways: a. *Comprehension* monitoring: checking, verifying, or correcting one's understanding. b. *Production* monitoring: checking, verifying, or correcting one's language production. c. *Auditory* monitoring: using one's "ear" for the language (how something sounds) to make decisions. d. *Visual* monitoring: using one's "eye" for the language (how something looks) to make decisions. e. *Style* monitoring: checking, verifying, or correcting based upon an internal stylistic register. f. *Strategy* monitoring: tracking use of hoe well a strategy is working. g. *Plan* monitoring: tracking how well a plan is working. h. *Double-check* monitoring: tracking, across the task, previously undertaken acts or possibilities considered.
Problem identification	Explicitly identifying the central point needing resolution in a task or identifying an aspect of the task that hinders its successful completion.
Self-evaluation	Checking the outcomes of one's own language performance against an internal measure of completeness and accuracy; checking one's language repertoire, strategy use, or ability to perform the task at hand. This has been coded in the think-alouds as: a. *Production* evaluation: checking one's work when the task is finished. b. *Performance* evaluation: judging one's overall execution of the task; c. *Ability* evaluation: judging one's ability to perform the task. d. *Strategy* evaluation: judging one's strategy use when the task is completed.