The impact of learning multiple foreign languages on using metacognitive reading strategies

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Abstract

This study aims primarily to investigate the impact of learning multiple foreign languages on the use of metacognitive reading strategies (MRSs) by foreign language teaching (FLT) department students. A number of factors such as gender, hand preference, class, and programme with reference to their belief orientation were also involved in the study. A five-scale Likert type questionnaire, consisting of 22 MRSs and 12 belief orientation items, was administered to 205 participants in the department of FLT at Çanakkale Onsekiz Mart University in Turkey. Post Hoc test indicated significant differences among the participants in different programs, evidencing the contribution of learning a second foreign language to the use of MRSs. Participants of the Japanese Language Teaching Programme implied that learners' preference of MRSs would develop hand in hand with their difficulty with the target language.

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The outline

- Reading process
- Memory and reading
- Learner characteristics
- Learner strategies
- Reading strategies
- Metacognitive reading strategies
- Study

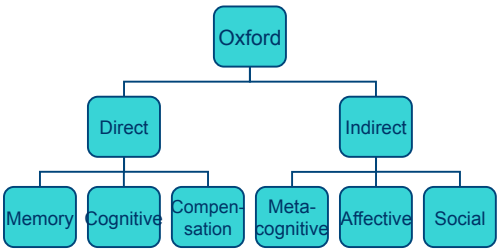
Reading process

- The most important activity in language classes (Rivers, 1981)
- An active cognitive system operating on printed material for comprehension (Chastain, 1988)
- Matching sounds to letters, and a mystery that nobody knows how it works (Goodman, 1988)
- Originally a passive, then active, and recently interactive process (Wallace, 2001)
- Activate background and linguistic knowledge to recreate the writer's intended meaning and go beyond the printed material (Chastain, 1988)
- Use a variety of clues to understand what is implied and see beyond the literal meaning of the words (Harmer, 2001)

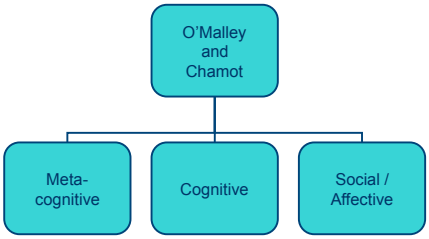
Learner characteristics

- Good language learners use strategies appropriately (Oxford, 2002) and adapt themselves to different situations through monitoring and adaptive strategies (Chamot and El-Dinary, 1999)
- Monitoring has a positive effect on achievement (Bialystock, 1981)
- Poor readers have difficulties in administering strategies such as predicting and monitoring (McNeil, 1987) and they use ineffective strategies (Chamot and El-Dinary, 1999)

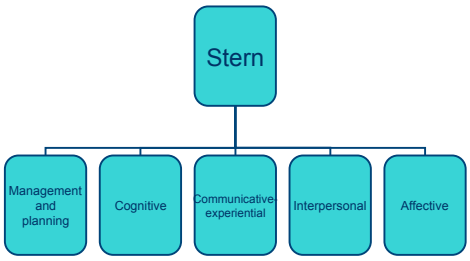
Learning strategies Oxford (1990)



Learning strategies O'Malley and Chamot (1990)



Learning strategies
Stern (1992)



Learning strategies

- "Specific actions taken by the learner to make learning easier, faster, more enjoyable, more self-directed, more effective, and more transferrable to new situations" (Oxford, 1990, p. 8).
- Strategy use is in parallel with learners' perception of strategies (Barnett, 1988).
- The use of strategy is not tied to any specific language (Block, 1986).
- Significant differences in the use of strategies in English – learned in a tutored – and Turkish – in a non-tutored manner (Alptekin, 2007).

Reading strategies

- Readers use different learning strategies (O'Malley and Chamot, 1990) and using more strategies results in better comprehension (Anderson, 1991)
- Real reading strategies vs classroom reading (Cross, 1999); reading a label on a bottle of wine vs reading an academic text (Nunan, 1999)
- Strategic readers are aware of their goals; able to administer strategies effectively, chosen carefully depending on their purpose, to check their understanding of the text and solve comprehension problems (Grabe and Stoller, 2001)
- The contribution of age: the less frequent and ineffective usage of strategies by younger and less proficient learners (Singhal, 2001)
- Successful readers use strategies effectively (Green and Oxford, 1995; Aebersold and Field, 1997).
- Efficient readers use different strategies for different purposes (Ur, 1996)
- Inefficient readers use the same strategy for all texts (Vann and Abraham, 1990)
- Readers' preferences of strategy choice are affected by their beliefs (LoCastro, 1994)

Metacognitive reading strategies

- Successful readers know about their cognition (Silberstein, 1994) and monitor their comprehension (Anderson, 1999)
- Understanding the process of knowing (Aebersold and Field, 1997)
- Thinking about thinking (Anderson, 1999)
- Extremely valuable in EFL contexts (Oxford, 2001) and reading (Oxford, 1990)
- Organize, plan, and evaluate learning (Richards and Lockhart, 1996)
- Oversee, regulate, self-direct (Rubin, 1981) and co-ordinate learning process (Johnson, 2001)
- Thinking about learning, monitoring own production, and evaluating comprehension (Cook, 2001)
- Strategies can be transferred to new tasks once learned (Chamot and O'Malley, 1987)
- Metacognitive awareness is crucial for effective learning (Willams and Burden, 1999)
- Metacognition maximizes memory, by knowing the limitations of it (Ellis Ormrod, 1995)
- *Skimming* and *scanning:* good strategies used by successful readers (Alderson, 2000; Bachman and Cohen, 1998; Flowerdew and Peacock, 2001; Brown, 2001)

Study

- Aim: the impact of learning multiple foreign languages on using MRSs by FLT department students at university level.
- Gender, hand preference, class, and programme, participants' belief orientation on the text were also involved.
- The six research questions:
  - ***Does learning another foreign language along with English have an impact on the use of MRSs?***
  - What are the most frequently used MRSs among foreign language learners?
  - Is there a correlation between the use of MRSs and belief orientation?
  - Does a right or left hand preference have an impact on the use of MRSs?
  - Does gender have an impact on the use of MRSs?
  - Does being a student in various classes at university have an impact on the use of MRSs?
- The hypothesis:
  - H1: Learning another foreign language along with English will be positively related to the use of MRSs.

Methodology
Setting

- Conducted at Çanakkale Onsekiz Mart University
- Faculty of Education
- FLT Department; ELT, GLT, and JLT Programmes
- 2007-2008 Academic Year; Fall semester
- FLT was suitable since all the students are accepted on their programmes by being successful in an English placement test.

Participants

- Young adults aged from 16 to 26 (average 19.7)
- Being trained to become teachers of English, German, or Japanese
- Studied English for 4-13 years (average 8.4 years)
- FLT is female-dominant
- ELT students outnumber GLT and JLT students

N	Total	Class					Programme				Hand preference		
		Prep	1st	2nd	3rd	Total	ELT	GLT	JLT	Total	Left	Right	Total
Female	165	64	65	19	17	165	81	53	31	165	14	151	165
Male	40	15	14	5	6	40	15	15	10	40	5	35	40
Total	205	79	79	24	23	205	96	68	41	205	19	186	205

Materials

- *Metacognitive Reading Strategies Questionnaire* (Taraban, Rynearson, and Kerr, 2000 and Taraban, Kerr, and Rynearson, 2004): 22 statements on the use of MRSs in two subcategories; *cognitively-based analytic strategies* and *action-based pragmatic strategies*
- *Reader Belief Inventory* (Schraw, 2000): 12 statements; two subcategories of *transaction* and *transmission*
- Demographic information: *age, period of study of English, programme, class, hand preference,* and *gender*

Procedures
Method of data collection analysis

- The copies of the questionnaire were delivered to the willing students.
- The data were entered on the computer through SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Sciences, version 10.0) and analysed by;
  - descriptive statistics,
  - correlations,
  - independent samples T-test,
  - oneway ANOVA test, and
  - post hoc multiple comparisons Scheffe tests.

Findings
Research Question 1: *Multiple FL*

- Oneway ANOVA test: a significant difference [F=8.003 p<.01]

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Strategies mean	Between Groups	3,240	2	1,620	8,003	,000
	Within Groups	40,885	202	,202		
	Total	44,125	204			

Post Hoc Multiple Comparisons
Scheffe Test

- Significant differences between JLT & ELT [p<.01] and between JLT & GLT [p<.05]. They confirmed the hypothesis.

Dependent Variable	(I) programme	(J) programme	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.
Strategies mean	ELT	GLT	-6,509E-02	7,131E-02	,660
		JLT	-,3380*	8,393E-02	,001
	GLT	ELT	6,509E-02	7,131E-02	,660
		JLT	-,2679*	8,896E-02	,012
	JLT	ELT	,3330*	8,393E-02	,001
		GLT	,2679*	8,896E-02	,012

Emerged data

- T-test group statistics: ELT vs GLT & JLT
- Superiority of GLT & JLT
- Significant different for the use of strategies [t=-2.583 p<.01]

Mean	Programme	N	$\overline{X}$	S.D.	t	df	Sig.
Strategies	ELT	96	3,6548	,4649	-2,583	203	,010
	GLT & JLT	109	3,8207	,4533			

T-test group statistics JLT vs ELT & GLT

- Superiority of JLT
- Significant difference for the use of strategies [t=3.897 p<.01]

Mean	Programme	N	$\bar{X}$	S.D.	t	df	Sig.
Strategies	JLT	41	3,9878	,4150	3,897	203	,000
	ELT & GLT	164	3,6818	,4578			

Research question 2: *Frequency of MRSs superiority of analytic*

Variable	Participants	Strategy group	N	$\bar{X}$	S.D.
All	All	Mean	205	3,7430	,4631
		Analytic	205	3,7765	,4689
		Pragmatic	205	3,6537	,4120
Period of English study	Has studied English for 4-6 years	Mean	33	3,6157	,46241
		Analytic	33	3,6117	,4563
		Pragmatic	33	3,6263	,8610
	Has studied English for 7-9 years	Mean	123	3,7542	,4815
		Analytic	123	3,7952	,4688
		Pragmatic	123	3,6450	,7208
	Has English for 10 or more years	Mean	49	3,8006	,4133
		Analytic	49	3,8406	,4618
		Pragmatic	49	3,6939	,5807
Class	Prep class	Mean	79	3,7112	,4992
		Analytic	79	3,7634	,5107
		Pragmatic	79	3,5717	,7317
	1ère class	Mean	79	3,8136	,4645
		Analytic	79	3,8426	,4513
		Pragmatic	79	3,7363	,7346
	2ème class	Mean	24	3,6420	,2866
		Analytic	24	3,6797	,3585
		Pragmatic	24	3,5417	,4746
	3ème class	Mean	23	3,7154	,4879
		Analytic	23	3,6957	,4735
		Pragmatic	23	3,7681	,7600
Age	19 and younger	Mean	106	3,7654	,4928
		Analytic	106	3,8101	,5058
		Pragmatic	106	3,6462	,6949
	20 and older	Mean	99	3,7190	,4346
		Analytic	99	3,7405	,4254
		Pragmatic	99	3,6616	,7333

Research question 2: *Frequency of MRSs superiority of analytic*

Variable	Participants	Strategy group	N	$\bar{X}$	S.D.
Programme	ELT programme	Mean	96	3,6548	,4649
		Analytic	96	3,6823	,4722
		Pragmatic	96	3,5816	,6943
	GLT programme	Mean	68	3,7199	,4483
		Analytic	68	3,7362	,4464
		Pragmatic	68	3,6765	,7391
	JLT programme	Mean	41	3,9878	,4150
		Analytic	41	4,0640	,3862
		Pragmatic	41	3,7846	,7034
	GLT & JLT programme	Mean	109	3,8207	,4533
		Analytic	109	3,8595	,4520
		Pragmatic	109	3,7171	,7245
Hand preference	Left-hand dominant	Mean	19	3,7344	,3721
		Analytic	19	3,7928	,4109
		Pragmatic	19	3,5789	,5425
	Right-hand dominant	Mean	186	3,7439	,4744
		Analytic	186	3,7749	,4754
		Pragmatic	186	3,6613	,7278
Gender	Female	Mean	165	3,7614	,4701
		Analytic	165	3,7883	,4736
		Pragmatic	165	3,6899	,7042
	Male	Mean	40	3,6670	,4412
		Analytic	40	3,7281	,4515
		Pragmatic	40	3,5042	,7333

Descriptive statistics of strategy items (N=205)

Items	$\bar{X}$	S.D.
12. Determine meaning of critical words	4,1902	,8955
3. Draw on knowledge	4,1610	,8509
22. Re-read for better comprehension	4,1070	,9844
18. Underline and highlight important info	4,0195	1,0477
15. Visualize descriptions	3,9512	,9062
7. Distinguish new and existing info	3,9415	,9002
4. Reconsider and revise background info	3,9268	,9391
20. Underline to remember	3,9073	1,0738
8. Inferring meaning	3,8829	,9424
1. Evaluate understanding	3,8780	,8458
14. Exploit personal strengths	3,8683	,9586
13. Check understanding of current info	3,8439	,9375
2. Anticipate how to use knowledge	3,7317	,8467
5. Reconsider and revise prior questions	3,6683	,9937
9. Evaluate goals	3,6537	,9610
11. Anticipate next info	3,6390	,9734
10. Search out info relevant to goals	3,5561	,9145
21. Read more than once to remember	3,5463	,9971
6. Consider interpretations	3,5122	,9580
17. Make notes to remember	3,2927	1,3107
16. Note readability of text	3,1220	1,2795
19. Use margins for notes	2,9951	1,2583

Research Question 3: *Belief orientation*

Variable	Participants	Strategy group	N	$\bar{X}$	S. D.
All	All	Mean	205	3,5841	,4817
		Transaction	205	3,9569	,5747
		Tranmission	205	3,2114	,7252
Period of English study	Has studied English for 4-6 years	Mean	33	3,3763	,5736
		Transaction	33	3,7525	,7774
		Tranmission	33	3,0000	,7301
	Has studied English for 7-9 years	Mean	123	3,6301	,4593
		Transaction	123	3,9986	,5480
		Tranmission	123	3,2615	,7167
	Has English for 10 or more years	Mean	49	3,6088	,4414
		Transaction	49	3,9898	,4506
		Tranmission	49	3,2229	,7326
Class	Prep class	Mean	79	3,5675	,4848
		Transaction	79	4,0295	,5214
		Tranmission	79	3,1055	,7212
	1ère class	Mean	79	3,2601	,2113
		Transaction	79	3,9008	,6556
		Tranmission	79	3,2194	,7824
	2ème class	Mean	24	3,6458	,4237
		Transaction	24	3,8681	,5270
		Tranmission	24	3,4236	,5472
	3ème class	Mean	23	3,6594	,4566
		Transaction	23	3,9928	,4936
		Tranmission	23	3,3261	,6676
Age	19 and younger	Mean	106	3,5676	,4831
		Transaction	106	4,0409	,5096
		Tranmission	106	3,0943	,7503
	20 and older	Mean	99	3,6019	,4820
		Transaction	99	3,8670	,6272
		Tranmission	99	3,3367	,6789

Research Question 3: *Belief orientation*

Variable	Participants	Strategy group	N	$\bar{X}$	S. D.
Programme	ELT programme	Mean	96	3,5142	,4820
		Transaction	96	3,9167	,5488
		Tranmission	96	3,1257	,7363
	GLT programme	Mean	68	3,5980	,4762
		Transaction	68	3,9265	,6125
		Tranmission	68	3,2696	,6911
	JLT programme	Mean	41	3,7918	,2610
		Transaction	41	4,1016	,5801
		Tranmission	41	3,6813	,7072
	GLT & JLT programme	Mean	109	3,5956	,4834
		Transaction	109	3,9924	,5968
		Tranmission	109	3,1988	,7000
Hand preference	Left-hand dominant	Mean	19	3,6886	,4705
		Transaction	19	4,0351	,4987
		Tranmission	19	3,3421	,7125
	Right-hand dominant	Mean	186	3,5735	,4828
		Transaction	186	3,9489	,5825
		Tranmission	186	3,1960	,7070
Gender	Female	Mean	165	3,5959	,4532
		Transaction	165	4,0141	,5336
		Tranmission	165	3,1737	,7212
	Male	Mean	40	3,5438	,5899
		Transaction	40	3,7208	,6777
		Tranmission	40	3,3667	,7501

Research Question 3: *Correlations*

$\overline{X}$		Strategies	Belief	Analytic	Pragmatic	Transaction	Trans-mission
Strategies	Pearson Cor.	---	,368**	,030**	,762**	,661**	,169*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	---	,000	,000	,000	,000	,015
	N	---	205	205	205	205	205
Belief	Pearson Cor.	,368**	---	,342**	,281**	,661**	,804**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,000	---	,000	,000	,000	,000
	N	205	---	205	205	205	205
Analytic	Pearson Cor.	,030**	,342**	---	,470**	,854**	,150*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,000	,000	---	,000	,000	,031
	N	205	205	---	205	205	205
Pragmatic	Pearson Cor.	,762**	,281**	,470**	---	,292**	,142*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,000	,000	,000	---	,000	,043
	N	205	205	205	---	205	205
Trans-action	Pearson Cor.	,661**	,661**	,854**	,292**	---	,086
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,000	,000	,000	,000	---	,218
	N	205	205	205	205	---	205
Trans-mission	Pearson Cor.	,169*	,804**	,150*	,142*	,086	---
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,015	,000	,031	,043	,218	---
	N	205	205	205	205	205	---

Research question 4: *Hand preference*

- Insignificant mean differences [t=-0.84 p= .933].

	Hand preference	N	$\overline{X}$	S.D.	t	df	Sig.
Strategies	Left	19	3,7344	,3721	-,084	203	,933
	Right	186	3,7439	,4744			

Research question 5: *Gender difference*

- Insignificant mean differences [t=1.152 p= .250]

	Gender	N	$\overline{X}$	S.D.	t	df	Sig.
Strategies	Female	165	3,7614	,4701	1,152	203	,250
	Male	40	3,6670	,4412			

Research Question 6: *Class*

- Oneway ANOVA test: insignificant difference [F=1.136 p=. 336]

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Strategies mean	Between Groups	,736	3	,245	1,136	,336
	Within Groups	43,389	201	,216		
	Total	44,125	204			

Discussion and conclusions

- A slight superiority for the use of analytic over pragmatic; the interaction is between the writer and the reader (Nuttall, 1996).
  - **Conclusion:** no tendency of preferring analytic MRSs to pragmatic MRSs, which might be because of participants' academic maturity.
- Readers' preferences of strategy choice is thought to be affected by their beliefs (LoCastro, 1994).
  - **Conclusion:** a preference of transaction orientation over a transmission orientation to text can be drawn and a low but significant correlation indicates that participants have a tendency to use MRSs more frequently with reference to their belief of the text.
- Left-handed vs. right-handers: the results indicate an insignificant difference.
  - **Conclusion:** the dominance of the brain does not have an impact on the use of MRSs.
  - Limitations:
    - Left-handed participants were far fewer than right-hand users.
    - Using the left / right hand does not guarantee the dominance of left / right hemisphere.

Discussion and conclusions (continued)

- No significant gender difference; future studies should test the impact of gender with an equal number of participants.
  - **Conclusion:** gender does not have an impact on the use of MRSs.
- Age is considered to be an effective factor (Chamot and El-Dinary, 1999; Singhal, 2001); no significant differences among various classes.
  - **Conclusion:** being in a different class at university does not affect the use of MRSs. The explanation for this could be the maturity of the participants.

Discussion and conclusions (continued)

- ELT vs GLT & JLT:
  - **Conclusion:** learning a second FL fosters use of MRSs.
  - English & German: the Indo-European language family; GLT make use of language transfer skills.
  - Japanese: the Altaic language family; JLT refer to more MRSs since Japanese does not allow them to transfer their skills.
  - The Japanese writing system could be considered another factor.
  - Participants learning a second FL make use of transfer skills as they are aware they can transfer learning strategies to new tasks (Chamot and O'Malley, 1987).

Implications (future studies)

- The five research questions need to be considered as hypotheses to be tested in future studies conducted with larger groups.
- The application of an MRS teaching module in an English as a single foreign language setting and another foreign language, along with English, may reveal more reliable results to test the effectiveness of these strategies.

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Thanks for your participation…