

なぜTOEFLのスコアは伸びないのか

——学習方略の必要性——

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Learning Strategies and TOEFL Scores

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要 旨 多くの学生が留学に必要なTOEFLスコアの550点を獲得するには最低1,000時間の学習が必要である。学生は授業以外に自習をするのは不可欠であるが、なかなか英語力がレベルアップしない。本研究では47名を対象にアンケート調査を行ったがその結果、多くの学生はLearning Strategies（学習方略）、特にMetacognitive Strategies（メタ認知方略）の知識が欠けていることが判明した。

キーワード learning strategies metacognitive learning styles

Introduction

In an earlier study, (2007) the researcher found that in her institution, students overall exhibited poor usage of learning strategies for language (L2) learning. This was especially evident when it came to the metacognitive functions of language learning, tasks that require self-management and monitoring of one's learning process. In the previous study, a strategy assessment questionnaire given to 50 first year students showed that in general, they did not spend time on such tasks as repeating, practicing, and reviewing either in or out of class. In the present study, the researcher again wished to find out if poor use of language learning strategies may be the reason behind the failure of another group of students in achieving significant gain in English proficiency.

Effective use of learning strategies has been linked to successful L2 language learning. As early as 1965, Politzer pointed out that successful language learners are those that have come up with a "successful self-teaching method." "Good language learner" studies have pointed out that regardless of the learning / teaching method, certain learners were consistently successful, (e.g. Rubin, 1975; Stern, 1975, Neiman et.al. 1978), employing methods such as making intelligent guesses, learning from errors and taking initiative in their learning. By the same token, high achievement in other subject areas such as science and social studies has been associated with the successful use of learning strategies.

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(Zimmerman, Bandura and Martinez-Pons, 1992).

Learning strategies are closely linked to learning styles. Learning styles can be defined as, "a general predisposition, voluntary or not, toward processing information in a particular way" (Skehan 1991: 288). Learning styles are numerous and varied, including affective, cognitive, and sensory factors. At least 21 components of learning style have been identified although it seems that most individuals have between 6 to 14 preferred elements. (Dunn, Gemake, Jalali & Zenhausern, 1990) Those that have been dealt with extensively in language acquisition research include field dependence and independence, (e.g. Chapelle and Roberts, 1986, Chapelle and Green, 1992, Stansfield and Hansen, 1983) tolerance of ambiguity (e.g. Ely, 1986, Naiman et al., 1978), left and right brain dominance, (e.g. Krashen 1981, Stevick 1982) and reflectivity and impulsivity (e.g. Goodman, 1970, Jamieson, 1992) Research has also been conducted on other aspects, such as sensory preferences according to culture. For example, Reid (1987) found that Asian students, especially those from Korea showed a preference for visual input. Hispanic students have been found to highly favor auditory input, while Japanese students tended to be nonauditory.

While learning styles tend to be internal tendencies or characteristics, learning strategies are external skills that individuals use to manipulate their learning in order to make it more effective. (Reid, 1995) There is some controversy as to whether the use of learning strategies is conscious or not, with some claiming that it is the element of consciousness that underlies the significance of learning strategies. Cohen's (1998) comprehensive definition of learning strategies includes the use of strategies before, during and after a language task, and encompasses the notion of language learning.

Language learning and language use strategies can be defined as those processes which are consciously selected by learners and which may result in action taken to enhance the learning or use of second or foreign language through the storage, retention, recall and application of information about that language. (p.4)

Extensive studies on learning strategies were conducted in the 1980s and 90s and various taxonomies were compiled. One of the most comprehensive models was created by Oxford (1990) including two strategy classes, six strategy groups, sixteen strategy sets, and sixty-two individual strategies. This model first classifies strategies as indirect or direct. Direct strategies are those that directly deal with the L2, and are used in various tasks and situations. On the other hand, indirect strategies are used to manage the learning of the L2. Oxford likens direct strategies to the performer in a play, and indirect strategies to the director. The class of direct strategies is comprised of memory strategies, cognitive strategies and compensation strategies; the class of indirect strategies includes metacognitive strategies, affective strategies and social strategies. Memory strategies are those that help the learner remember and retrieve new information. Cognitive strategies help the learner manipulate

the L2 in various ways and include individual strategies such as practicing, analyzing and note-taking. Compensation strategies allow the learner to use the language despite lack of or insufficient knowledge. Metacognitive strategies manage the learner's overall learning process, before, during, and after the language learning tasks. Examples of metacognitive strategies include time-management, organizing materials and evaluating one's success. Affective strategies support the emotional aspects of learning, while social strategies accommodate the learner's interaction with others. Individual affective strategies include talking about one's feelings and controlling one's anxiety. Examples of individual social strategies include asking for clarification, asking questions and conversing with native L2 speakers. It goes without saying that there is a great deal of overlap among individual strategies, and it is virtually impossible to draw complete distinctions among them. Language learners most likely employ several strategies simultaneously, and will use different strategies for different tasks. However, as in learning styles, individuals will have tendencies to prefer certain strategies over others.

The researcher's interest in learning strategies arose from a professional curiosity regarding her students' learning behaviors. At her institution, the bulk of the students are fashion majors, and students in their freshman and sophomore years are required to take three periods of English per week. Many of the students are interested in the in-house exchange student program, which gives them the opportunity to study at a prestigious fashion school in the U.S. or the U.K. Unfortunately, the TOEFL requirement for these schools, 550 on the paper-based test, is too stringent for the majority of the students.

Although it is difficult to accurately predict how many hours are necessary to make a significant gain in TOEFL scores, a reasonable estimate would be at least 1000 hours. In the institutional TOEFL administered in July 2007, the mean score of students aspiring to take advantage of the above-mentioned student exchange program was 418, or approximately TOEIC 390*. The TOEFL requirement for the exchange program is TOEFL 550, or approximately TOEIC 730. An estimate given by a language consulting service indicates that approximately 750-1000 hours of study is necessary in order to progress from a TOEIC score of 400 to 700, so it is reasonable to assume that approximately the same number of hours would be required for equivalent TOEFL scores. (Prolingua, 2000)

Because the number of contact hours in the classroom, 135 hours a year, does not come close to the amount of time that is required for the students to make significant improvement, it is imperative that the students be autonomous learners, that is, they need to take the initiative to study on their own outside the classroom, in addition to taking advantage of everything that the classroom teaching offers.

Although the instructor/researcher cannot ascertain how much time the students are spending outside of the classroom for self-study, the in-class review sessions and quizzes give some indication of what they were doing, or rather, what they were not doing outside of class at least in regard to the classroom activities. The students consistently failed to achieve more than 60% on the weekly

written vocabulary quizzes that typically ask them to define the twenty words that had been covered the week before. Oral review of listening tasks produced similar results. The students failed to recall the expressions or vocabulary that had been covered in the previous lesson. If these students were not even reviewing what was being covered in class, it was reasonable to assume that they were not spending time engaging in autonomous tasks that would help them in improving their TOEFL scores. Partially out of curiosity, and mostly out of a professional desire to rectify this dire situation, the researcher set out to discover what, if any, learning strategies were being employed by this group. Did these students understand what it took to be autonomous learners? Did they have specific ideas on what they could do to improve their English proficiency outside of the classroom? Were they aware of what they could also be doing inside the classroom to enhance their learning? In short, the researcher hoped to find out if her learners had some idea of successful learning strategies, and if in fact they were using them.

Method

The subjects are 47 Japanese female students in the first year of the International Fashion and Culture Studies Program at Bunka Women's University. In an open-ended questionnaire, they were asked to provide suggestions to Japanese high school students that wished to improve their English. This idea came from a study done by Beebe (1988) on Japanese high school students, where in an interview they were asked to give advice to high school students with a desire to gain proficiency in their English listening and speaking skills. An open ended format was deliberately chosen for this study as this was an initial attempt, and it was not known how the subjects would answer. Also, the researcher wanted to see if they would provide additional useful information that may not be gleaned had a more restrictive way to elicit answers been used. As Dornyei (2003) explains, "Although we cannot expect any soul searching self-disclosure in the responses, by permitting greater freedom of expression, open-format items can provide a far richer "richness" than fully quantitative data." After writing down their suggestions, the subjects were asked to indicate whether they themselves had actually implemented them, and to comment on the effectiveness of their recommendations. They were told that that they were free to respond in either English or Japanese. The students were asked if the researcher had their permission to use their answers in a future publication, to which all gave their verbal agreement. The students' suggestions are shown in Table 1.

Table 1 Some students gave multiple answers

N=47

Speak English	38
Learn vocabulary	22
Listen to songs	21
Watch movies / TV in English	15
Read English	13
Do something in English every day	9
Study abroad	6
Learn grammar	5
Listen to the radio	5
Read out loud	4
Look up unfamiliar words	3
Get used to ("nareru") English	3
Read the lyrics to English songs	3
Sing in English	2
Learn lots of idioms	2
Write a diary in English	2
Repeat and review	2
Find something you like doing in English	2
Go to conversation school	1
Have a purpose for studying English	1
Take official tests such as Eiken	1
Don't be shy	1
Use the grammar and vocabulary you have learned	1
Use an English self-study book	1
Participate in international exchange events	1
Listen to lots of English	1
Be interested in American / British / Canadian culture	1
Memorize vocabulary	1
Look up unfamiliar words and write the meanings down	1
Exchange e-mail	1
Write down vocabulary words again and again	1
Write something in English	1
Concentrate in class and participate	1
Go to "juku"	1

Results and Discussion

Many suggestions were given, the responses ranging from very specific, e.g. "Write down vocabulary words again and again," to very general, e.g. "Be interested in American / British / Canadian culture," "Speak English," "Don't be shy."

Table 2 gives a breakdown of the five most popular suggestions.

Table 2

	Speak English (38)	Learn vocabulary (22)	Listen to songs (21)	Watch movies/tv (15)	Read English (13)
Did not implement	13	5	1	2	3
Effective	7	7	7	3	4
Somewhat effective	3	3	4	2	0
Result unknown	10	7	7	7	6
Gave up	5	0	1	1	0

31 students answered that to "Speak English" was an effective way to improve one's English. Native speakers, English teachers, English-speaking friends and/or classmates were suggested as possible interlocutors. It is worth noting that despite its popularity as a recommendation, almost half of the respondents (42%) failed to implement it themselves, citing lack of opportunity or availability of partners as their reason.

Ranking in popularity in the number two slot was "Learn vocabulary", giving testimony to the importance that students place on vocabulary knowledge. Although all of those who made the suggestion had tried it themselves, only three responses gave specific details regarding how they had actually gone about implementing this suggestion. (i.e. look at vocabulary notebook, write down words again and again, look up unfamiliar words right away and learn pronunciation at the same time) Furthermore, although 45% of the students rated this task as effective, 32% offered no comment regarding its effectiveness.

"Listen to songs in English", was a popular recommendation suggested by 21 students. All of the students had actually tried this out at one time or another; however, 33% of the respondents failed to mention if this was indeed effective or not. As in the other suggestions given above, even though the subjects offered it as advice to the high school students, they themselves did not always feel that this had actually helped in improving their English. Similar results can be seen from "Watch movies/TV in English." Although 33% reported that they had tried this and felt that this was effective or somewhat effective, 53% did not report on its effectiveness. Some responses mentioned specific how-to instructions, such as watching movies with or without subtitles, watching repeatedly, and watching in Japanese first to aid comprehension.

14 students reported that "Read English" was an effective way to promote improvement in English. Approximately one third of the students reported that it was effective or somewhat effective. Some specific examples of reading materials were suggested, such as song lyrics, picture books, Disney stories and text that one was already familiar with in the L1, Japanese.

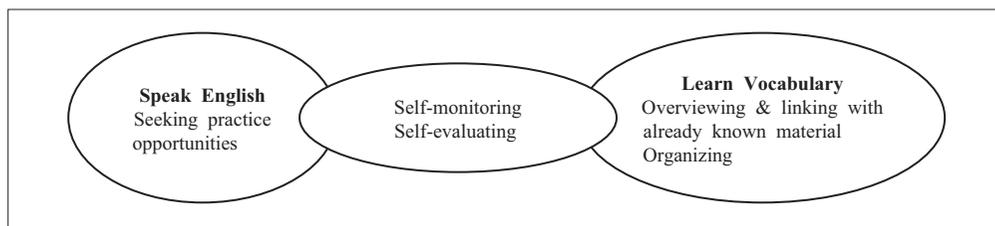
Discussion

Judging by the number and variety of responses overall, the students seem to have a good idea of resources (e.g. TV, books, magazines, songs) one can use to study English, but not particularly how to utilize them to achieve successful results, in other words, employing learning strategies. In the following discussion, the names of individual strategies come from Oxford's classification of learning strategies. (1990) The most overwhelmingly popular suggestion, "Speak English" seemingly a simple task, involves a number of strategies, the most relevant from the cognitive, compensation, social, affective and metacognitive strategy groups. According to Oxford, "Practicing" is the most important strategy set in the Cognitive strategy group, in particular, "Practicing naturalistically." Researchers have shown the significance of naturalistic practice for communicative purposes in second language acquisition (Bialystok, 1982). Compensation strategies are those that learners, especially beginning

learners resort to, in order to accommodate their insufficient or lack of knowledge of the L2. Lower level learners, such as the subjects in this study, will find a great need to resort to individual compensation strategies such as "Using mime or gesture", "Adjusting or approximating the message" and "Using a circumlocution or synonym." Affective strategies include "Taking risks" and "Using laughter" while Social strategies include "Asking for clarification or verification", "Cooperating with peers", and "Developing cultural understanding."

"Learn Vocabulary" is, as the subjects believe, an important component of language learning. In fact, if done systematically, learners can effectively develop the vocabulary knowledge they will need for their particular field of study. (Nation 1990) However, the ambivalence shown regarding the effectiveness of their suggestions makes one wonder if these subjects actually made significant improvement. If the weekly vocabulary quizzes in the researcher's classes show that they were not capable of successfully dealing with 20 words or expressions, that may also be an indication that these subjects are not utilizing learning strategies regarding this area of language learning. As in "Speak English", "Learn Vocabulary" involves several strategies to do effectively. Memory strategies are especially important for this task as it is extremely difficult for learners, especially those at the beginning stages of language learning, to handle large amounts of vocabulary. These include "Grouping", "Placing new words into a context", "Structured reviewing" and "Using mechanical techniques."

Diagram 1 Metacognitive Strategies Used in "Speak English" and "Learn Vocabulary"



In both "Speak English" and "Learn Vocabulary", the two tasks that the subjects unanimously agreed were effective language learning tools for attaining higher proficiency, metacognitive strategies, those that accommodate the planning, monitoring, and evaluating of learning, are crucial. In response to whether the subjects had actually used "Speaking English" themselves, many of them reported that they had not, citing lack of opportunity or availability of interlocutors. This is clearly a good example of failing to use the metacognitive strategy of "Seeking opportunities to practice." At the very least, the subjects in this study have English classes at least three or four times a week where if they chose to, could feasibly seek practice opportunities with their English instructors (both native and Japanese), and with each other. In terms of vocabulary learning, when given vocabulary lists to study from, the

subjects frequently claim that they are unable to deal with the large numbers of words and expressions that must be learned. Although some students resort to tactics such as writing the words down again and again, there seems to be a lack of conscious use of metacognitive strategies such as "Linking with Already Known Material" and "Organizing" in order to gain optimum results. Diagram 1 shows the various metacognitive strategies involved in the tasks of "Speaking English" and "Learning Vocabulary."

In Beebe's study, it was shown that the degree of English proficiency corresponded to the degree of autonomy of the learners. (1998) Although her subjects received the same amount of instruction inside the classroom, the high proficiency students took it upon themselves to seek opportunities for practice, inside and outside of the classroom. Many of the resources that they used are similar if not identical to those suggested by the subjects in this study. Yet, it is how they used these methods, i.e. the strategies that they used, that made Beebe's high proficiency students such good speakers and listeners. The subjects made extensive use of what she refers to as "entertainment listening" (e.g. movie videos, TV programs and pop songs) as well as "pedagogical listening" (e.g. NHK radio lessons), but what was significant about the subjects with high proficiency was the intensity and duration of these sessions. One such student listened to NHK radio lessons daily for six years, while another used movies where she repeatedly used the techniques for memorization, translation, and analysis. The researcher herself has had experience with her own "good language learner", a student receiving the same amount of classroom instruction as the others but managed to improve her TOEFL score by 100 points in a year due to her daily and rigorous self-study, in this case reading English newspapers.

These "good language learners" have been able to take advantage of the full spectrum of learning strategies that enhance their learning. In terms of Oxford's classification of learning strategies, not only do they use cognitive strategies such as practicing and analyzing, they use memory strategies such as reviewing and applying images and sounds as well as compensation strategies such as guessing intelligently. Perhaps even more significant is that they maximize their use of metacognitive strategies, where they focus, arrange, plan and evaluate their learning. (1990) Studies have shown that L2 learners of high proficiency have a tendency to use more metacognitive strategies than those with lower proficiency. One such study on learners of French in Canada concluded that the biggest difference between successful and unsuccessful learners lay in the former's use of metacognitive strategies, and that the difference was not as significant regarding cognitive strategies. (Anderson and Vandergrift, 1996) It has also been reported that successful use of metacognitive strategies actually translate into better test performance. (Purpura, 1997, 1998)

Some researchers such as Wenden (1995) have focused on metacognitive strategies based on the construct of metacognitive knowledge. Wenden defines metacognitive knowledge as "the stable, stable and sometimes fallible knowledge learners acquire about themselves as learners and the

learning process." (pg.185) Metacognitive strategies put this knowledge to work, and involve "thinking about the learning process, planning for learning, monitoring the learning task, and evaluating how well one has learned." (O'Malley and Chamot, 1990: 137) Metacognitive knowledge has been further broken down into three components: person, task and strategy knowledge (Flavell, 1976) and it has been observed that training students in these three aspects of knowledge will enable them to choose appropriate strategies for their learning. (e.g. Goh and Taib, 2006) Furthermore, it has been found that in the case of listening, it is possible to tailor classes to raise their metacognitive awareness, and consequently their ability to regulate the listening process. (Vandergrift , 2000)

Conclusion

This study was an attempt to identify what kinds of learning strategies were being actively used by a group of L2 learners of English. The information attained from the questionnaires shows that the subjects seem to have ideas about ways to improve their English proficiency; however, they are not aware of how to maximize their learning through the use of strategies, and consequently are unsuccessful at making significant improvement. This seems to be particularly true in the area of metacognitive strategies, those that indirectly affect language learning tasks by organizing and managing the language learning process.

Learning strategies are not restricted to language learning; they are relevant to all areas of study. Since the mid 1990s, researchers in Japan have found that students in Japanese universities exhibit an appalling deficiency in mathematics and sciences. (Tose and Nishimura, 2001) This is due partly to demographics in Japan (the dearth of available college-bound 18 year olds due to the declining birthrate) resulting in *zennyu* (college education for all) compounded by *yutori kyoiku* (translated loosely as a relaxed approach to education) implemented by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology in the 1980s. (MEXT) Furthermore, in recent years, university officials at even prestigious schools such as Tokyo University and Waseda University lament that many of their students do not know how to study, and attribute this primarily to the teaching techniques of *juku*, the ubiquitous cram schools where students "study" the techniques for passing the entrance examinations to specific universities. Rather than teaching the students to reason and think for themselves, students are spoon-fed techniques of carrying out individual tasks. (Komiyama, 2005) Amidst such circumstances, it is not surprising that students come to language classes unprepared to handle the daunting task of learning a language.

If students enter language classes in tertiary education ill-equipped with strategies for learning, inevitably it becomes the responsibility of instructors to provide for this lack of knowledge. Take for example, vocabulary learning in an L2. Intuitively, both learners and teachers sense the value of keeping a vocabulary notebook for acquiring new vocabulary, and often, language instructors encourage this to accommodate autonomy among their learners. However, a recent study done on

vocabulary notebooks (Mc Crostie, 2007) showed that learners tend to select words from certain parts of speech over others, opt for vocabulary that is not particularly useful, and fail to choose high frequency words. This study concluded that learners need guidance regarding vocabulary selection, and that for lower level students, word lists may be preferable. Here the benefits of a potentially useful pedagogical tool are undermined by the learners' lack of the learning strategies that would have made them more effective learners, in particular the metacognitive strategies that would have allowed them to focus, organize and plan for the task at hand.

Japan's trademark of excellence on its legendary educational system is quickly becoming a thing of the past. However, in an increasingly global world, and one where the Internet is being dominated by the English language, communicative ability in English is increasingly in demand, so much so, that English is now becoming a required subject in elementary schools. Without the appropriate learning strategies, effective learning cannot take place, and learners will fail to make progress in such tests that measure English proficiency as the TOEFL, let alone to use English for communication. All of us involved in the teaching and learning of languages need to keep in mind that:

The process of learning how to learn languages is inseparable from the process of learning languages. Both build upon awareness of language, or the development of the learner's implicit and explicit metalinguistic knowledge base. (Benson 2001 : 98)

* TOEIC and TOEFL are both developed by ETS (Educational Testing Service) and the conversion formula given is: $\text{TOEIC score} \times .348 + 296 = \text{TOEFL score}$

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