

琉球大学学術リポジトリ

Strategies in learning a foreign language and English proficiency levels: an examination of Japanese EFL learners

メタデータ	言語: 出版者: 琉球大学法文学部国際言語文化学科欧米系 公開日: 2010-11-30 キーワード (Ja): キーワード (En): 作成者: Fewell, Norman メールアドレス: 所属:
URL	http://hdl.handle.net/20.500.12000/18588

Strategies in learning a foreign language and English proficiency levels: an examination of Japanese EFL learners

Norman Fewell

Introduction

Language learning strategies (LLSs) have been identified as significant and influential variables that may offer insight into the resultant variance of language learner proficiency levels. Early studies concerning characteristics of successful language learners (Rubin, 1975; Stern, 1975; Naiman et al., 1978) have generated interest in understanding individual differences and the variables that may affect this process. Since the complexities of second language acquisition involve an array of uncontrollable influential factors, many practitioners and scholars have embraced LLSs as being an effective and workable component of the language learning process. The ability to directly manipulate and manage these elements for improved language learning efficiency distinguishes LLSs from a number of variables that impact the language learning process. Advocated as an important and teachable component for language learning (Chamot, 2001; Chen, 2007; Oxford & Nyikos, 1989), the potential and practicability of LLSs has led to the development of a number of language strategy training programs (Cohen, 1998; Macaro, 2001; Nunan, 1996; Sengupta, 2000; Yang, 1996) encouraging further interest in this area. Additionally, proponents of increased language learner autonomy have recognized LLSs as a key factor in promoting individualized learning and responsibility as viable alternatives to total classroom dependency (Brown, 1994; Oxford, 1996; Wenden, 1991;

Yang, 1998). Recognizing the potential impact of LLSs, a comparative investigation of strategy preferences and English language proficiency levels was conducted on a group of university EFL students in Okinawa, Japan to assess possible correlations. Further examination included an exploration into the possibility of additional related elements influencing LLS preferences and utilization.

Emergence of LLS Research

As an increasing number of studies have begun to identify noticeable differences in the individual language learner, a gradual interest emerged into research focusing on individual diversity and distinction. Studies that have once monopolized second language acquisition (SLA) research with an examination of language and methodology began to shift towards investigating learner characteristics. After Rubin (1975) and Stern (1975) established precedence for focus on good language learner characteristics, a new area of interest in SLA began to materialize. Afterwards, the publication of *The Good Language Learner* (Naiman et al., 1978) emerged and the concept of investigating individual language learner characteristics would become an integral part of SLA research. Among numerous individual language learner variables that have been studied quite extensively in SLA since the mid-70s, research in LLSs has continued to attract interest. Although a number of researchers have found a positive association between increased LSS utilization and increased second language (L2) proficiency (Bruen, 2001; Gan, Humphreys & Hamp-Lyons, 2004; Lan & Oxford, 2003), Reiss (as cited in Kaylani, 1996, p. 78) found that it was not merely the quantity but the quality of LLSs used that was a recognizable element

distinguishing successful from less successful learners. Similarly, other studies have suggested that although more successful learners tended to use more strategies, the number of strategies was less important than the relevance of strategy application to a given task (Chamot & Küpper, 1989; Naiman et al., 1978; Oxford, 1990, 1992; Rubin, 1975, 1987).

LLS preferences and the degree of utilization may ultimately depend on any number of possible factors, including cultural background, educational experiences, learning goals, motivation, attitude, age, and gender variability (Cohen, 1998; O'Malley et al., 1985a, 1985b; Oxford, 1990; Politzer & McGroarty, 1985). Additional factors, such as stage of learning, task requirement, and individual learning styles may also influence selection and frequency of LLSs (Oxford, 1990; Reid, 1987, 1995), not to mention factors relating to personality (Oxford & Cohen, 1992), sensory preferences (Oxford et al., 1991; Reid, 1987, 1995) and individual language learner beliefs (Horwitz, 1987, 1999; Wenden, 1987, 1999; Yang, 1999). A multitude of potential variables may impact language learner differences and ultimately LLS preferences. Further complications arise from the fact that researchers may encounter difficulties due to retrieval method limitations of external observations such as: think aloud protocol, interviews, diary entries, questionnaires, or other participant conscious methods; certainly susceptible to falsification. There are certainly limitations in LLS research and critics have attempted to identify its vulnerabilities (Macaro, 2006; Seliger, 1983; Woodrow, 2005). Nevertheless, the difficulties of data collection are only a small obstacle in comparison to the potential benefits LLSs have to offer language learners.

Language Learner Strategies

Language learner strategies may be defined as actions learners utilize to improve the development of their language learning skills (Oxford, 1990). The *Strategy Inventory for Language Learning* (SILL), a questionnaire designed to measure LLSs, attempts to first identify user preferences in a classification system of two general strategy groups, direct and indirect. More precise measurements focus identification of LLSs within subcategories consisting of six strategy groups in total. Strategies that directly involve learning the target language (TL) include memory, cognitive, and compensation. Memory strategies concern the storage and retrieval of new language. Cognitive strategies involve the mental processes associated with manipulating, transforming, and interacting with the TL. Compensation strategies are utilized by learners to offset inadequate knowledge needed for understanding and production of the TL. The second set of strategies presented by Oxford (1990) includes indirect strategies or those involving actions or processes which learners regulate, manage, and self-direct in learning. Indirect strategies refer to strategies that are limited to a supportive role without being directly related to the interaction of language itself. Strategies categorized within this group include metacognitive, affective, and social. Metacognitive strategies are aspects associated with planning, monitoring, and evaluating the TL. Affective strategies refer to strategies that learners utilize to control emotions and attitudes about language learning. Finally, social strategies are those employed to facilitate engagement in the TL through interaction with others.

As interest in LLSs has been steadily growing for the past thirty years, the creation of the SILL (Oxford, 1990) was the result of the

need to establish some standardization in gathering comparable data. The SILL has yielded an enormous amount of research to date that has heightened awareness of the importance of LLS. Periodic studies allow us to assess the situation in numerous language learning settings and promote the basic premise of continual encouragement for language learners to more effectively utilize LLSs. A significant portion of early research was limited to observations of sample groups of unguided language learners who have randomly adopted LLSs by their own initiatives. During this period many researchers were only beginning to investigate LLSs and practitioners have not yet integrated this concept into their classes. As LLSs were unfamiliar to most learners and educators, success or failure in a language depended, to a large extent, on instinct and guesswork in the selection of appropriate LLSs. Based on observations and interviews of successful and unsuccessful language learners, researchers were eventually able to identify more preferable LLSs for learning efficiency. As information concerning LLSs was initially retrieved from the miscalculations of less successful learners and the unpredictable guesswork of more successful learners, one may assume that this method of inquiry was restricted to an era in history of less complete knowledge and that current circumstances no longer reflect this situation with the widespread availability of information concerning LLSs. Although the current language learning environment has since evolved with innovative teaching methodologies and advanced technological tools to assist learners, the levels of LLS awareness in some EFL settings continues to be severely limited.

Strategy Inventory for Language Learning

The SILL was developed by Oxford (1990) to assess language learner preferences and the frequency of LLS utilization. It also served a need for a standardized questionnaire that could be used in a variety of second and foreign language learning contexts. A self-report questionnaire used to measure the frequency and form of language learning strategies, it consists of a total of 50 items describing language learning strategies that participants rate on a five-point Likert scale from strongly agree to strongly disagree. SILL scores averaging 3.5 - 5.0 are designated as high; 2.5 - 3.4 are considered medium strategy utilization; and scores ranging from 1.0 - 2.4 are often labeled as low strategy use (Oxford & Burry-Stock, 1995). A total of six sections, each measuring a specific type of LLS, correspond to one of the six strategy types designated by Oxford's (1990) LLS categorization:

<p>A. Direct Strategies</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Memory Strategies<ol style="list-style-type: none">a. Creating mental linkagesb. Applying images and soundsc. Reviewing welld. Employing action2. Cognitive Strategies<ol style="list-style-type: none">a. Practicingb. Receiving and sending messagesc. Analyzing and reasoningd. Creating structure for input and output3. Compensation Strategies<ol style="list-style-type: none">a. Guessing intelligentlyb. Overcoming limitations in speaking and writing	<p>B. Indirect Strategies</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Metacognitive Strategies<ol style="list-style-type: none">a. Centering your learningb. Arranging and planning your learningc. Evaluating your learning2. Affective Strategies<ol style="list-style-type: none">a. Lowering your anxietyb. Encouraging yourselfc. Taking your emotional temperature3. Social Strategies<ol style="list-style-type: none">a. Asking questionsb. Cooperating with othersc. Empathizing with other <p style="text-align: right;">(Oxford, 1990, p.17)</p>
--	--

The Study

The aim of this study is to examine the relation between LLS utilization and English proficiency levels among a group of EFL learners in a Japanese university. In addition, a number of potential influential variables relevant to both LLS utilization and English proficiency levels were examined. This study will also offer a perspective uncharacteristic of typical ESL environments in its examination of a closer homogenous sample group. This will allow for less variable interference from the effects of differing languages and cultural backgrounds. In addition, this particular EFL setting offers a unique perspective in comparison to the Japanese mainland. Okinawa may be described as a declining multilingual community gravitating towards monolingualism. Remnants of its native languages barely survive in remote areas of the islands with some lexical and phonological characteristics present elsewhere in a local blend with the dominant national language of Japanese. Okinawa also offers an additionally unique perspective with its history of English language contact. Formerly a U.S. occupied territory for over a quarter of a century with several major U.S. military bases still occupying the island, the existence of a formidable English-speaking population have continually inhabited Okinawa for the past sixty years. The island of Okinawa may also be described as a quasi-ESL/EFL environment, depending on individual contact with the local English-speaking population. Diverse language communities exist on the island, with the proportion of English-speakers related to the proximity from the U.S. military bases. The overall English-speaker population on the islands fluctuates around 5% to 6% of the total island population. It has been noted that foreign and second language learning situations are

dependent on individual willingness to interact with TL speakers, despite the composition of the language community (Cohen, 1998). However, the availability of this option alone is a distinguishing feature of Okinawa from that of mainland Japan. SILL-based research on the mainland of Japan by Noguchi (as cited in Oxford & Burry-Stock, 1995, p. 13), revealed a lesser degree of social LLS utilization by participants, the result of a nearly nonexistent foreign English-speaking population. This exemplifies the extreme differences between these two distinct language environments. The abovementioned circumstances may present favorable conditions for SILL-based research in this language setting.

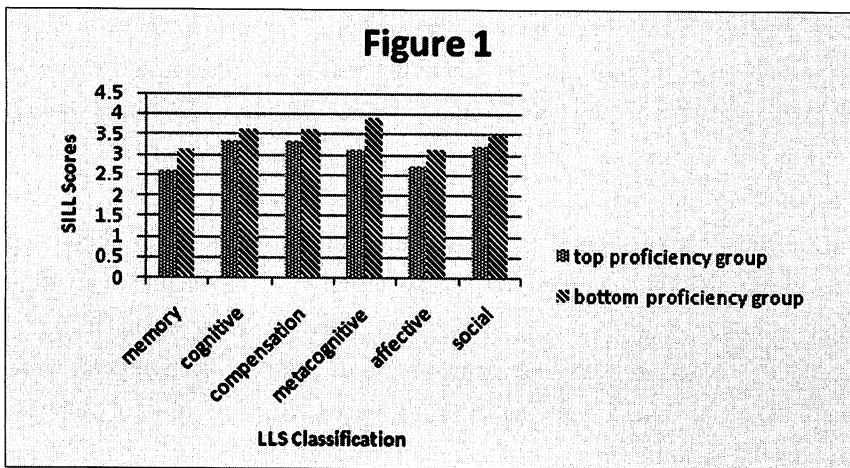
Methods and Results

This study attempts to evaluate data collected from a variety of sources to determine patterns and frequency of LLS utilization in comparison to English proficiency levels among a group of EFL learners. Data were collected through administration of a Japanese translated version of the Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL version 7.0 for ESL/EFL learners, 50 items), to assess the frequency and form of utilization of language learning strategies (Oxford, 1990). In addition, a computerized English proficiency test, a brief background questionnaire and interviews with selected participants were conducted. Data collected from participants in the study were divided into two groups, depending on English proficiency test scores. A comparative sampling of participants based on English proficiency scores in the top 25% and bottom 25% would allow a more distinct representation of the correlation between LLS preferences and English proficiency levels. The sample group consisted of EFL

students enrolled in a university language class in Okinawa, Japan. All of the participants were majoring in English-related studies. The number of participants in the study consisted of 32 students in total. The subjects were further divided into two subgroups based on English proficiency scores on a standardized English exam. Each subgroup included of eight participants in either the top or bottom English proficiency group. An interview session was conducted with this selective group of participants. A closer examination of LLS preferences and utilization between participants scoring in the top 25% of an English language proficiency test and those scoring in the bottom 25% of the test would reveal which LLSs may have been more beneficial for this group of language learners. The interview was based primarily on an open-ended format to allow the interviewee leeway in controlling the direction and the amount of content in response to questioning. The interviews attempted to disclose several key issues, these included reasons and possible sources of influence for LLS selection. Inquiries were also directed at revealing motivation and attitudes toward learning English. Further questioning included individual language learning routines and beliefs. Participants were also asked to share any advice they could offer to others studying English. The interviews attempted to explore the initial reasons for interest in English, the amount of language exposure, and expectations concerning individual needs of English in the future. As many of the results in the questionnaire remained puzzling with no feasible explanation, these interviews soon took on an added critical role of extracting further information from participants to provide needed assistance in determining the rationale for selection and utilization of LLSs.

The implementation of the SILL followed the guidelines as stated

by the questionnaire's accompanying directives (Oxford, 1990). The results of the SILL questionnaire were compared between the two groups that were sorted according to scores on an English proficiency test. A comparison of English proficiency levels and SILL utilization indicated an unexpected correlation. In this particular sample group, it was found that as English proficiency levels increased, LLS utilization decreased. The SILL results of the top 25% of English proficient learners had an average score of 3.0 while the bottom 25% had an average score of 3.5. In every category, the SILL scores of the bottom group were higher than that of the top group (see figure 1).



According to SILL calculations, participants in the top proficiency group utilized a medium range of LLSs in every category. In contrast, SILL scores of the bottom proficiency group were calculated as being high in nearly every category. These participants indicated a medium level of utilization for memory and metacognitive strategies. The SILL results in this study were uncharacteristic of typical SILL research findings that have often established a positive correlation in the frequency of strategy utilization and an increase in language

proficiency levels (Bruen, 2001; Gan, Humphreys & Hamp-Lyons, 2004; Lan & Oxford, 2003).

Rote Learning Dependency

The interviews revealed that all of the participants in the study received their initial exposure to LLSs, and in many cases their only exposure, in the form of rote learning. Although most of the participants attended different junior high schools, all of them were encouraged to utilize rote learning by their junior high school English teachers. Specifically, they were instructed to write vocabulary items repeatedly until memorized. The reasons for its widespread application are unclear. Speculation can certainly point towards dependence on the use of standardized testing and entrance examinations and the resultant pressures for teachers to have their students succeed with high scores. Reliance on standardized testing tools to measure success or failure within an educational system has been a source of scrutiny for numerous years for a variety of reasons and the possibility of it exerting influence on LLS preferences and utilization could certainly be another of its undesirable side effects.

An additional influential factor for dependency on rote learning may be *learning strategy transfer* from one academic discipline to another. The Japanese writing system, a mixture of four separate orthographical forms, *hiragana*, *katakana*, *romaji*, and *kanji* (Chinese characters), may offer a suitable explanation for the over reliance on rote learning. In addition to the complexities involved among a number of possible phonological variations and interpretive meanings that may exist with each *kanji* character, the learner must memorize the correct stroke order in writing each line. As many of the *kanji* require at least

a dozen or more strokes to complete each character, one can understand that to obtain efficiency in memorizing writing patterns within this complex orthographical system, utilization of rote learning is crucial. Throughout the duration of education, a high school graduate in Japan would have studied nearly two thousand basic *kanji* (Habein & Mathias, 2000). Further education and specialization could easily double that number. Considerably more characters are used in the Chinese language on a daily basis, approximately ten to twelve thousand (Campbell, 1991). Researchers have noted similarities in Asian learners adopting rote learning as the primary LLS (O'Malley, 1987; O'Malley & Chamot, 1990; Politzer, 1983; Politzer & McGroarty, 1985). Furthermore, several studies have identified rote learning as the most common LLS advocated by teachers of *kanji* (Naka & Naoi, 1995; Shimizu & Green, 2002; Wang & Thomas, 1992). A concept that may be described as *learning strategy transfer* from one academic discipline to another, in the orthographical mastery of Chinese characters, may offer a more suitable explanation for rote learning tendencies in language study among Asian learners.

Differences in LLS Utilization

An analysis of SILL scores between the two groups revealed less utilization of LLSs with participants in the top English proficiency group. During the interviews, further inquiry revealed that all of the participants were introduced to rote learning in school. The key difference that distinguishes the top group from the bottom group in the study is that all of the participants in the top group, at an early stage in language learning, rejected the rote learning method advocated by their junior high school teachers and began to search for

alternative LLSs on their own initiative. These learners rejected rote learning because they felt that it was boring and ineffective. Rejection of rote learning and a search for alternative LLSs at an early stage in language learning were crucial in influencing the eventual success of these participants. Although the participants in the bottom English proficiency group admitted to a continued reliance on rote learning, these learners also mentioned utilizing a higher variety of LLSs than the participants in the top English proficiency group. The critical factor that distinguishes either success or failure between these two groups of language learners is the time that these learners began to seek out and adopt different LLSs. Participants in the bottom group became interested in English at a later stage of learning, overall. While 6 of the 8 learners in the bottom group indicated being interested in English less than 4 years ago, all of the learners in the top group indicated being interested in English for a period exceeding 4 years or more.

Additional time is certainly advantageous for language learners, allowing a longer period of refinement of LLS skills, and this may offer a feasible explanation as to the observed differences in LLS utilization and English proficiency levels between the top and bottom groups. As many of the top proficient English learners have dismissed rote learning as an ineffective LLS and began searching for other more productive LLSs at an earlier stage of language learning, in time these learners were more likely to find, adopt, and refine suitable LLS alternatives. As many of the less proficient learners have indicated a more recent interest in English, a possible explanation for their high LLS utilization levels may simply be the fact that they are in the initial stages of adopting and sampling LLSs. These learners are just beginning to take the initiative to explore a variety of available LLSs

in a process involving trial and error.

Instrumental and Integrative Orientation

As motivation and attitudes are certainly underlying variables relevant to language learning in general, its applicability in influencing LLS tendencies is an important element to consider as it directly affects the degree of effort a language learner undertakes in pursuing the TL. Research investigating the impact of language learning motivation towards LLS use has found it to be one of the most significantly influential factors (Oxford & Nyikos, 1989; Oxford et al., 1993; Wharton, 2000). Although this study did not specifically engage in investigating motivation and attitudes, the interviews revealed some distinguishing patterns between the different groups of learners that need further clarification. As a potential variable influencing LLS preferences and utilization, the concepts of instrumental and integrative orientation were briefly examined. *Instrumental orientation* is a concept initially defined by Gardner and Lambert (1972) to describe learners with purely goal driven reasons to pursue L2 study, such as, enhancing career advancement, fulfilling an educational requirement, or simply increasing one's prestige in the community. Another descriptive concept created by Gardner and Lambert, *integrative orientation*, refers to learners who are motivated to study a language with the purpose of meeting and communicating with members of the TL community. Classification of learner motivation as being strictly instrumental or integrative were not clear in some cases, as language learners may sometimes indicate attributes from both categories (Clement & Kruidenier, 1983). Nearly all of the participants in the study indicated some degree of instrumental orientation. The

majority of participants in both groups indicated a specific need for language study to fulfill English-related career goals. An additional distinguishing element between the two proficiency groups was observed in the integrative actions of the participants. The unique language setting of Okinawa offers TL communicative opportunities for language learners, although geographic distance from English speaking communities on the island may be a primary factor to consider in many cases. Additionally, the majority of language learners in the top proficiency group have experienced an extended period abroad in an English-speaking country. Although both groups of language learners indicated positive attitudes towards the TL, significant differences were observed in engaging in actual communicative interaction with members of the TL group. The majority of participants in the top group indicated having native-English speaking friends while only one participant in the bottom group indicated some occasional email communication with a native-English speaking friend. Although, the degree of integrative orientation was not measured in detail, simply establishing the fact that increased outlets of native-speaker contact were available for the majority of participants in the top English proficiency group suggests the likelihood that integrative orientation may have some relevance in regard to language learner attitudes and motivation, and subsequently LLS preferences.

Conclusion

Numerous variables may potentially affect LLS selection and utilization. Ultimately, it is the discretion of the individual language learner to decide on the extent and form of LLS utilization. Researchers have acknowledged the complex network of experiences,

attitudes, perception and beliefs of the language learner in relation to learning behavior (Benson, 2001; Cotterall, 1995; Horwitz, 1985, 1987, 1988; Nyikos & Oxford, 1993; Wenden, 1986, 1987, 1999; Yu, 2007). During the interviews, an inquiry into an extensive array of factors potentially influencing LLS outcome has led to a continual pattern of reference to the dominant role of the teacher. The demands of educational settings requiring stringent standardized examinations restrict teachers to focus on preparing students for tests. In numerous cases, LLS utilization has been the result of guidance received in class for learners to maintain rote learning methods. Although arguably not necessarily ineffective for certain aspects of language learning such as vocabulary acquisition (Nation, 2009), singular focus on this particular LLS may be detrimental to the overall goals of language learning. An additional source that may further aggravate rote learning dependency may be due to the complexity of the Japanese writing system and the preferred methods of study. Learning the Japanese writing system requires the mastery of a complex array of four separate orthographical forms requiring years of dedicated study. As a number of researchers have found an inclination among teachers to use rote learning methods in classes teaching Chinese characters (Naka & Naoi, 1995; Shimizu & Green, 2002; Wang & Thomas, 1992), it is not surprising that many Asian learners have continued to utilize this particular LLS. A concept that may be described as *learning strategy transfer* could offer explanation of shared strategies found in different academic disciplines.

A significant distinction was observed among participants in the two proficiency groups in the degree of social distance with the target group. All of the learners in the top group indicated having native-English speaking friends while only one participant in the bottom

group indicated occasional communicative interaction with a native speaker of English. These findings are parallel to Schumann (1978, 1986) on the principles of his acculturation theory in that success in the TL corresponds to the degree of social and psychological contact with the target language group. Although a questionnaire attempted to assess attitudes and motivational inclinations of participants based on the Gardner and Lambert (1972) concept of orientation as either instrumental or integrative, it became obvious that a disparity existed between expressed motivational inclinations and actual TL communicative interaction.

Finally, participants in the top proficiency group have indicated an exploration into alternative LLSs at an early stage in their language learning endeavors. These students felt rote learning was ineffective and insufficient for their language learning goals and they began to search for other LLSs based on their own intuition. A process that may be described as a random experiment of "trial and error" may have determined the eventual success or failure of these language learners. Another factor distinguishing these language learners from the bottom proficiency group may be the element of time. As nearly all of participants in both groups have acknowledged utilizing a variety of LLSs, the bottom English proficiency group initiated their search for alternative LLSs fairly recently. This fact may strengthen the argument for introducing LLSs at an early stage in language learning. An awareness of the diversity of available LLSs can only improve the likelihood of success for language learners. Individual differences in learning styles, motivation, expectations and goals should persuade educators to offer language learners a more diverse selection of LLSs that may better correspond to their needs. Although this study only presents some insight into a small selection of possible influential

variables affecting LLS selection and utilization among a limited sample group, it is hoped that this general investigation of issues in LLSs may promote further discussion and awareness into an area deemed critical for enhancing the language learning process.

References

- Benson, P., & Lor, W. (1999). Conceptions of language and language learning. *System*, 27(4), 459-472.
- Breen, M.P. (Ed.). (2001). *Learner contributions to language learning*. Harlow: Longman.
- Bruen, J. (2001). Strategies for success: Profiling the effective learner of German. *Foreign Language Annals*, 34(3), 216-225.
- Campbell, G.L. (1991). *Compendium of the World's Languages*. London: Routledge.
- Chamot, A.U., & Küpper, L. (1989). Learning strategies in foreign language instruction. *Foreign Language Annals*, 22(1), 13-24.
- Chamot, A.U. (2001). The role of learning strategies in second language acquisition. In M.P. Breen (Ed.), *Learner contributions to language learning*. (pp. 25-43). Harlow: Longman.
- Chen, Y. (2007). Learning to learn: The impact of strategy training. *ELT Journal*, 61(1), 20-29.
- Clement, R., & Kruidenier, B. (1983). Orientations in second language acquisition: I. The effects of ethnicity, milieu, and target language on their emergence. *Language Learning*, 33(3), 273-271.
- Cohen, A.D. (1998). *Strategies in Learning and Using a Second Language*. New York: Addison Wesley Longman Limited.
- Cotterall, L.S. (1995). Readiness for autonomy: Investigating learner beliefs. *System*, 23(2), 195-205.

- Gan, Z. D., Humphreys, G., & Hamp-Lyons, L. (2004). Understanding successful and unsuccessful EFL students in Chinese universities. *The Modern Language Journal*, 88(2), 229-244.
- Gardner, R.C., & Lambert, W.E. (1972). *Attitudes and motivation in second language learning*. Rowley: Newbury House.
- Gingras, R.C. (Ed.). (1978). *Second language acquisition and foreign language teaching*. Arlington, Virginia: Center for Applied Linguistics.
- Habein , Y.S., & Mathias, G.B. (2000). *Decoding Kanji: A Practical Approach to Learning Look-Alike Characters*. Tokyo: Kodansha International.
- Horwitz, E. K. (1985). Using student beliefs about language learning and teaching in the foreign language methods course. *Foreign Language Annals*, 18(4), 333-340.
- Horwitz, E.K. (1987). Surveying student beliefs about language learning in A.L. Wenden, & J. Rubin (Eds.), *Learner strategies in language learning* (pp. 119-129). Cambridge: Prentice Hall International.
- Horwitz, E.K. (1988). The beliefs about language learning of beginning university foreign language students. *Modern Language Journal*, 72(3), 283-294.
- Horwitz, E.K. (1999). Cultural and situational influences on foreign language learners' beliefs about language learning: a review of BALLI studies. *System*, 27(4), 557-576.
- Kaylani, C. (1996). The Influence of Gender and motivation on EFL Learning Strategy Use in Jordan. In R.L. Oxford (Ed.), *Language Learning Strategies Around the World: Cross-Cultural Perspectives* (pp. 75-88). Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press.
- Lan, R. L., & Oxford, R. L. (2003). Language learning strategy of

- elementary school students in Taiwan. *International Review of Applied Linguistics*, 41(4), 339-379.
- Macaro, E. (2001). *Learning Strategies in Foreign and Second Language Classrooms*. London: Continuum.
- Macaro, E. (2006). Strategies for language learning and for language use: Revising the theoretical framework. *Modern Language Journal*, 90(3), 320-337.
- Naiman, N., Fröhlich, M., Stern, H.H., & Todesco, A. (1978). *The Good Language Learner*. Research in Education Series No.7. Toronto: Ontario Institute for Studies in Education.
- Naka, M., & H. Naoi. (1995). The effect of repeated writing on memory. *Memory and Cognition*, 23(2), 201-212.
- Nation, P. (2008). *Teaching Vocabulary - Strategies and Techniques*. Boston: Heinle Cengage Learning.
- Noguchi, T. (1991). *Review of language learning strategy research and its implications*. Unpublished bachelor's thesis, Tottori University.
- Nunan, D. (1996). Learner strategy training in the classroom: an action research study. *TESOL Journal*, 6(1), 35-41.
- Nyikos, M., & Oxford, R. (1993). A factor analytic study of language learning strategy use: Interpretations from information processing theory and social psychology. *Modern Language Journal*, 77(1), 11-22.
- O'Malley, J.M., Chamot. A.U., Stewner-Manzanares, G., Küpper. L., & Russo, R.P. (1985a). Learning strategies used by beginning and intermediate ESL students. *Language Learning*, 35(1), 21-46.
- O'Malley, J.M., Chamot. A.U., Stewner-Manzanares, G., Russo, R.P., & Küpper. L. (1985b). Learning strategy applications with students of English as a second language. *TESOL Quarterly*, 19(3), 557-584.

- O'Malley, J.M. (1987). The effects of training in the use of learning strategies on learning English as a second language. In A.L. Wenden, A.L., & J. Rubin (Eds.), *Learner Strategies in Language Learning*. (pp. 133-157) Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall.
- O'Malley, J.M., & Chamot, A.U. (1990). *Learning Strategies in Second Language Acquisition*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Oxford, R., & Nyikos, M. (1989). Variables affecting choice of language learning strategies by university students. *Modern Language Journal*, 73(3), 291-300
- Oxford, R.L. (1990). *Language Learning Strategies: What Every Teacher Should Know*. Boston: Heinle and Heinle Publishers.
- Oxford, R.L. & Cohen A.D. (1992). Language learning strategies: crucial issues of concepts and classifications. *Applied Language Learning*, 3(1-2), 1-35.
- Oxford, R.L. (1992). Research on second language learning strategies. *Annual Review of Applied Linguistics*, 13, 174-187.
- Oxford, R.L., Park-Oh, Y., Ito, S., & Sumrall, M. (1993). Learning a language by satellite television: what influences student achievement? *System*, 21(1), 31-48.
- Oxford, R.L., & Burry-Stock, J.A. (1995). Assessing the use of language learning strategies worldwide with the esl/efl version of the strategy inventory for language learning (SILL). *System*, 23 (1), 1-23.
- Oxford, R.L. (Ed.). (1996). *Language Learning Strategies Around the World: Cross-Cultural Perspectives*. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press.
- Politzer, R. (1983). An Exploratory study of self-reported language learning behaviors and their relation to achievement. *Studies in Second Language Acquisition*, 6(1), 54-65.

- Politzer, R., & McGroarty, M. (1985). An exploratory study of learning behaviors and their relationship to gains in linguistic and communicative competence. *TESOL Quarterly*, 19(1), 103-123.
- Reid, J.M. (1987). The learning style preferences of ESL students. *TESOL Quarterly*, 21(1), 87-111.
- Reid, J.M. (Ed.). (1995). *Learning styles in the ESL/EFL classroom*. Boston: Heinle and Heinle.
- Reiss, M.A. (1983). Helping the unsuccessful language learner. *Canadian Modern Language Review*, 39(2), 256-266.
- Rubin, J. (1975). What 'good language learners' can tell us? *TESOL Quarterly*, 9(1), 41-51.
- Rubin, J. (1987). Learner strategies: theoretical assumptions, research history, and typology. In A.L. Wenden, & J. Rubin (Eds.), *Learner Strategies in Language Learning*. (pp. 15-30) Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall.
- Schumann, J. H. (1978). The acculturation model for second language acquisition. In R. C. Gingras (Ed.), *Second language acquisition and foreign language teaching* (pp. 27-50). Arlington, Virginia: Center for Applied Linguistics.
- Schumann, J. H. (1986). Research on the acculturation model for second language acquisition. *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development*, 7(5), 379-92.
- Seliger, H. W. (1983). The language learner as linguist: Of metaphors and realities. *Applied Linguistics*, 4(3), 179-191.
- Sengupta, S. (2000). An investigation into the effects of revision strategy instruction on L2 secondary school learners. *System*, 28(1), 97-113.
- Shimizu, H., & K. E. Green. (2002). Japanese language educators' strategies for and attitudes toward teaching kanji. *Modern*

- Language Journal*, 86 (2), 227-241.
- Stern, H.H. (1975). What we can learn from good language learners? *Canadian Modern Language Review*, 31(4), 304-318.
- Wang, A.Y., & Thomas, M.H. (1992). The effect of imagery-based mnemonics on the long-term retention of Chinese characters. *Language Learning*, 42 (3), 359-376.
- Wenden, A. (1986). What do second language learners know about their language learning? A second look at retrospective accounts. *Applied Linguistics*, 7 (2), 186-205.
- Wenden, A.L. (1987). Conceptual background and utility. In A.L. Wenden, & J. Rubin (Eds.), *Learner strategies in language learning* (pp. 159-168). Cambridge: Prentice Hall International.
- Wenden, A.L., & Rubin, J. (Eds.). (1987). *Learner strategies in language learning*. Cambridge: Prentice-Hall International.
- Wenden, A.L. (1991). *Learner Strategies for learner Autonomy: Planning and Implementing learner Training for Language Learners*. Hertfordshire: Prentice-Hall International.
- Wenden, A.L. (1999). An introduction to Metacognitive Knowledge and Beliefs in Language Learning: beyond the basics. *System*, 27(4), 435-441.
- Wharton, G. (2000). Language learning strategy use of bilingual foreign language learners in Singapore. *Language Learning*, 50(2), 203-243.
- Woodrow, L. (2005). The challenge of measuring language learning strategies. *Foreign Language Annals*, 38(1), 90-99.
- Yang, N.D. (1996). Effective awareness-raising in language learning strategy instruction. In R.L. Oxford (Ed.), *Language learning strategies around the world: cross-cultural perspectives* (pp. 205-210). Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press.

- Yang, N.D. (1998). Exploring a new role for teachers: promoting learner autonomy. *System*, 26(1), 127-135.
- Yang, N.D. (1999). The relationship between EFL learners' beliefs and learning strategy use. *System*, 27(4), 515-535.
- Yu, X. (2007). A survey on the relationship between learning beliefs and learning strategies. *US-China Education Review*, 4(1), 58-61.

Summary

Strategies in learning a foreign language and English proficiency levels: an examination of Japanese EFL learners

Norman Fewell

This study attempts to examine language learning strategy (LLS) utilization patterns of Japanese EFL learners. The Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL), developed by Oxford (1990) to assess selection and frequency of LLSs, provided insight into individual utilization of memory, cognitive, compensation, metacognitive and social strategies. A comparison of two groups of learners, sorted according to language proficiency levels, revealed that selection of LLSs may have been a critical factor in determining eventual success or failure in language learning.