The Effect of Learning Styles and Strategies in the Development of Student's Thinking Skills

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Abstract:

This paper aims at showing the impact of learning styles and strategies in the development of student's thinking skills cognitively. It focuses on the learning which refers to the acquisition of symbolic knowledge. Style refers to consistent and rather enduring tendencies or preferences within an individual. Learning style refers to different ways used in learning. While, strategy is specific methods of approaching a problem or task, modes of operation for achieving a particular end, planned designs for controlling and manipulating certain information. This study concludes a number of recommendations and educational proposals that have to do with learning style and strategy concerning motivation of student's thinking skills.

Key words: student, skills, learning, styles, strategies, motivation

1. BACKGROUND INFORMATION OF THE BASIC CONCEPTS: SURVEY

1.1Applied Linguistics

Crystal (1992: 24) defines applied linguistics as the use of linguistic theories, methods and findings in elucidating and

solving problems to do with language which have arisen in other areas of experience. Hartmann and Stork (1972: 17) considered applied linguistics as collective term for the various applications of linguistic and phonetic scholarship to relate practical fields. Linguistic knowledge can be used to solve practical language problems in language teaching (i.e., acquisition of the native or foreign language). Some linguists used the term applied linguistics to refer to solely to pedagogical aspects.

Applied linguistics is a larger field of study than teaching language such as communication studies, education, psychology and sociology (Yule, 1996: 197). Applied linguistics is an interdisciplinary field of research and practice dealing with practical problems of language and communication that can be identified, analysed or solved by applying available theories, methods or results of linguistics or by developing new theoretical and methodological frameworks in linguistics to work on these problems(Cook and Wei, 2009: 1).

1.2 Learning

Learning implies a progressive change in behavior. It involves new ways of doing things and it operates in an individual attempt to overcome some barriers or to adjust themselves to new situations. Learning is the acquisition of symbolic knowledge, attitudes, habits, and skills. Learning is not limited to classroom or over to school. It begins long before a child enters school and may continue long after school days (Aggarwal, ND: 42).

1.3 Process

Process is the most general terms all human beings engage in certain universal process such all need water, feed, for our survival. So, all humans of normal intelligence engage in certain levels or types of learning such as learners use

principles of transfer in the process of learning and retention. Therefore, process is characteristic of every human beings (Brown, 1987: 78).

1.4 Style

Style is considered as group of ideas. It is the personal use of an individual that makes in speech or writing of the language at his disposal. Contemporary linguistic take a wider view of style recognizing the less conscious personality traits in the language of an individual speaker in relation to time, place, social environment and subject matter (Hartmann, 1972: 223).

Style is a term that refers to consistent and rather enduring tendencies or preferences within an individual. Styles are those general characteristic of intellectual functioning that especially pertain to learning as individual that differentiate one learner from another. For example, some learners might be more visually oriented more to Levant of ambiguity, or more reflective than some learners else these would be styles that characterize a general pattern in his/her thinking(Brown, 1987: 79).

1.5 Strategies

Strategies are specific methods of approaching a problem or task, modes of operation for achieving a particular end, planned designs for controlling and manipulating certain information. Strategies vary intra-individually, each of us has a whole host of possible ways to solve a particular problem and everyone can choose one or several of those in sequence for a given problem.(Brown, 1987: 79). Strategies refer to the process when learners use foreign language that make learners employs a number of strategies which are usually aimed at improving their performance(Schmitt, 2002: 178). Strategies are those specific attacks that we make for given problem(Brown, 1987: 189).

2. TYPES OF LEARNING

Gagne identified eight types of learning:

1. Signal learning: the individual learning to make a general diffuse response to a signal. This is the classical conditioned response of Pavlov.
2. Stimulus-response learning: the learner acquires a precise response to a discriminated stimulus. In Skinnerian terms, a discriminated operant and sometimes called an instrumental response.
3. Chaining: what is acquired is a chain of two or more stimulus-response connections. The conditions for such learning have also been described by Skinner.
4. Verbal association: verbal association is the learning of chains that are verbal.
5. Multiple discrimination: the individual learning to make a number of different identifying responses to many different stimuli, which may resemble each other in physical appearance to a greater or lesser degree.
6. Concept learning: the learning acquires the ability to make a common response to a class of stimuli even though the individual members of that class may differ widely from each other. The learner is able to make a response that identifies an entire class of subjects or events.
7. Principle learning: a principle is a chain of two or more concepts. It functions to organize behaviour and experience.
8. Problem solving: problem solving is a kind of learning that requires the internal events usually referred as thinking. Previously acquired concepts and principles are combined in a conscious focus on an unresolved or ambiguous set of events (Brown, 1987: 79).

3. LEARNING STYLES

Learning styles are used in language learning for making out different preferred responses to language learning problems or different ways of thinking. Willing(1988) states that the relationships with language learning and styles are centering on the equation of analytic learning style with academic and accuracy oriented learning, global learning, style with more communicative and fluency-oriented learning and a number of experimental pieces of research have given support on the usual psychometric correlation with achievement. He chooses to evaluate learning styles statistically by seeing how the most popular preferences clustered together. He found four clusters calling them as follow: analytical, concrete, communicative and authority-oriented (McDonough, 2002: 95-96).

Learning style has been used to refer to different members used in educational psychology and the L2 field learning. People learn in different ways and what suits one learner may be inadequate for another. While learning styles seem to be relatively stable, teachers can modify the learning tasks they use in their classes in a way that may bring the best out of particular learners with particular language style preferences (Schmitt, 2012: 162).

3.1 Examples of Learning Styles

3.1.1. Field Independence
Field independence is your ability to perceive a particular item in a field of distracting items.

3.1.2. Field Dependence
Field dependence is the tendency to depend on the total field to the extent that you do not perceive the embedded parts. The total field is perceived as a unified whole.

3.2 Field Independence Advantage and Disadvantage

Field independence enables a person to distinguish parts from a whole and to concentrate on details. While its disadvantage is that a person sees only the parts and fails to see the whole picture and material.

3.3 Field Dependence Advantage and Disadvantage

Field dependence enables a person to perceive the whole picture of a problem, an idea or an event. While its disadvantage is that a person may get distracted easily and may not be able to see details or variables.

3.4 The Relationship between Field Independence and Dependence with Second Language Learning

Field independence is closely related to classroom learning which involves analysis, attention to details, exercises and prefers deductive types of learning. Field dependence is more successful in learning in natural settings. It tends to prefer inductive learning (Brown, 2000: 121-125 &Lightbown and Spada, 1993: 40-41).

4. TYPES OF STYLES

4.1 Types of Styles According to Problem-Solution

4.1.1 Systematic Style

Systematic thinkers tend to weigh all the considerations in a problem, work out all the loopholes, and then after extensive reflection venture solution.

4.1.2 Intuitive Styles

An Intuitive thinker makes a number of different gambles on the basis of hunches with possibly several successive gambles before a solution is achieved (Brown, 2000: 133-134).

4.2 Types of Styles According to Input of the learners

4.2.1. Visual Styles
Visual styles refer to the preference that learners show toward visual input. Visual learners tend to prefer reading and studying charts, drawings and other graphic information.

4.2.2. Auditory Styles
Auditory styles refer to the preference that learners show toward auditory input. Auditory learners prefer listening to lectures and audiotapes.(Lightbown and Spada, 1993: 41).

4.3 The Categories of Style Preferences
The distinctions are emerging from the literature, three categories of style preferences are considered particularly relevant and useful in understanding the process of language learning:

1. Sensory or Perceptual style preferences: being more visual, more auditory or more tactile.

2. Cognitive style preferences: being more global or more particular or detail-oriented, being more deductive of a synthesizer and being analytic and being more deductive or more inductive.

3. Personality-related style preferences: being more extroverted or more introverted, being more abstract and intuitive or more concrete and thinking in step by sequence, preferring to keep all options open or being more closure-oriented (Schmitt, 2012: 163).

5. STEPS OF STYLE AND STRATEGY BASED INSTRUCTION

Teachers take a number of steps to make their instruction style and strategy based along with motivating learners to engage themselves in this type of awareness rising:

1. Raise learner awareness about learning style preferences and language learner strategy at the outset in order to generate motivation be more conscious about style preferences and more proactive about the use of language strategies.

2. Find out which styles the learners favour and which strategy the students may already use or may wish to add to their repertoire.

3. Suggest and model what style stretching might look like as well as modelling new strategies.

4. Encourage students to enhance their current strategy repertoire (Schmitt, 2002: 185).

6. LEARNING STRATEGIES

Learning strategies are specific actions taken by the learner to make learning easier, faster, more enjoyable, more self-directed, more effective, more transferable to new situations (Lightbown and Spada, 1993: 40-41)

6.1. Types of Strategies

6.1.1 Strategies according to the field of second language acquisition

The field of second language acquisition has distinguished between two types of strategy:

1. Learning strategies relates to input to processing, storage and retrieval (Brown, 1987:91).

2. Communication Strategies has more to do with output or how we express meaning in the language how we act upon what we already know or presume to know (ibid). Communication strategies have primary been viewed as the verbal or non-verbal first aid devices which may be used to deal with problems or breakdowns in communication. These devices enable learners to stay active partners in communication even when things do not go well. Learners use communication to steer the conversation away from problematic areas, to express their meaning in creative ways, to create more time for them to think and to negotiate the difficult parts of their communication with their conversation partner until everything is clear.

Thus, these strategies extend the learner's communicative means beyond the constraints of target language proficiency and consequently help to increase their linguistic confidence as well. Communication strategies also include conversational interaction strategies and strategies for maintaining the floor which learners who are not experiencing gaps in their knowledge may use(Schmitt, 2002: 179).

6.1.2 Strategies according to mental processes
6.1.2.1. Cognitive strategies

Cognitive strategies are more limited to specific learning tasks and involve more direct manipulating of the learning material itself (Brown, 1987: 94). Cognitive strategies encompass the language learning strategies of identification, grouping, retention and storage of language material as well as the language use strategies of retrieval, rehearsal and comprehension or production of words, phrases and other elements of the L2.

The cover many of the processes or mental manipulations that learners go through in both learning and using the target language(Schmitt, 2002: 181). Strategic

competence is not part of language ability and includes ability to identify the information needed to achieve particular communicative goals, planning and execution (Kaplan, 2002: 461). It is the ability to use language, to organize effective message and to overcome potential communication problems as part of communicative competence (Yule, 2010: 295).

Cognitive Strategies	
Repetition	Imitating a language model including covert practice and silent rehearsal.
Resourcing	Using target language reference material
Translation	Using the first language as a base for understanding and producing the second language
Grouping	Reclassifying and labelling the material to be learning based on common attributes
Note taking	Writing down the main idea, important points, outline or summary of information presented orally or in writing.
Deduction	Consciously applying rules to produce or understand the second language.
Recombination	Constructing a meaningful sentence or larger language sequence by combining known elements in a new way.
Imagery	Relating new information to visual concepts in memory via familiar easily retrievable visualisations, phrases, or location.
Auditory Representation	Retention of the sound or a similar sound for a word, phrase, or larger language sequence.
Keyword	Remembering a new word in the second language by 1) identifying a familiar word in the first language that sounds like or otherwise resembles the new word. 2)generating easily recalled images of some relationship between the new word and the familiar word.
Contextualisation	Placing a word or phrase in a meaningful language sequence
Elaboration	Relating new information to other in memory
Transfer	Using previously acquired linguistic and conceptual knowledge to facilitate a new language learning task.
Inferencing	Using available information to guess meaning of new items and predict outcomes or fill in missing information

Table (6-1) Shows Types of Cognitive Strategies (Brown, 1987: 93-94).

6.1.2.2Meta-Cognitive Strategy

Meta-Cognitive strategy is a term used in information-processing theory to indicate an executive function as in strategies that involve planning for learning, thinking about the learning process as it is taking place, monitoring of one's production or comprehension and evaluating learning after an activity is completed(Brown, 1987: 94).

Meta-cognitive strategies are those processes which learners consciously use in order to supervise or manage their language learning. Such strategies allow learners to control their own cognition by planning what will do, checking how it is going and then evaluating how it went(Schmitt, 2002: 181). Meta-cognitive is a visual component in any strategy based instruction programme as it encourages the learner through reflection to take responsibility for their learning(Cook, ND: 25).

Meta-cognitive components can be thought of as higher order executive process that provide a cognitive management function in language use as well as in other cognitive activities(Kaplan, 2002: 461).

Types of Meta-Cognitive strategies	
Advance organizes	Making a general but comprehensive preview of the organizing concept or principle in an anticipate learning activity
Directed attention	Deciding in advance to attend in general to a learning task and to ignore irrelevant distractors.
Selective attention	Deciding in advance to attend to specific aspects of language input or situational details that will cue the retention of language input.
Self-management	Understanding the conditions that help one learn and arranging for the presence of those conditions.
Functional planning	Planning for and rehearsing linguistic components necessary to carry out an upcoming language task.
Self-monitoring	Correcting one's speech for accuracy in pronunciation to the setting or to the people who are present.
Delayed production	Consciously deciding to postpone speaking in order to learn initially through listening comprehension.
Self-evaluation	Checking the outcomes of one's own language learning against an internal measure of completeness and accuracy

Table (6-2) Displays Types of Meta-Cognitive Strategies (Brown, 1987: 93).

6.1.2.3. Socio-Affective Strategies

Socio-affective strategies have to do with social-mediating activity and transacting with other(Brown, 1987: 49). They serve to regulate emotions, motivation and attitudes. For example, before a job interview in the L2, a learner may engage in positive self-talk about focusing on the message rather than on the investable grammatical errors that will emerge. Social strategies include the actions which learners choose to take in order to interact with other learners and with native speakers, such as strategies are usually directed at increasing the learner's exposure to L2 communication and to interactive practice(Schmitt, 2002: 181).Topical knowledge or effective schemata is being defined as the affective or emotional correlates of topical knowledge(Kaplan, 2002: 461).

Socio-Affective Strategies	
Cooperation	Working with one are more peers to obtain feedback, pool information, or model a language activity
Question for clarification	Asking a teacher or other native speaker for repetition, paraphrasing, explanation and making examples.

Table (6-3) Shows Types of Socio-Affective Strategies (Brown, 1987: 94).

6.3. Strategies According to Skill Areas

6.3.1 Listening Strategies

These strategies are used to increase exposure to the new language such as going to see a movie in the language, to become more familiar with sounds in the new language by looking for associations between the sound of a word or phrase in the language and the sound of a familiar word or by imitating the way native speakers talk (Schnitt, 2002: 182).

6.3.2 Speaking Strategies

Speaking strategies consider speaking as interactional behaviour. Communication breakdowns have been consider as

involving both participants. Speaking strategies include both interaction strategies as well as compensation strategies (Cook, ND: 29).

6.3.3 Vocabulary Strategies

Vocabulary strategies are used to memorise new word by analyzing words to identify the structure and meaning of a part or several parts of them. Also, they use in order to review vocabulary by going over new words often at first to make sure they are learned or by going back periodically to refresh one's memory about words previously learned(Schmitt, 2002: 183).

6.3.4 Writing Strategies

These strategies should be viewed within process writing (Cook, ND: 29). They are used for planned how to write an academic essay, monitoring to see how the writing is going, and then checking to see how well the product fits the intentions. Also by making an effort to write different kinds of texts in the target language for example, personal note, messages, letters and course papers(Schmitt, 2002: 183).

6.3.5Reading Strategies

These strategies are used for planning how to read a text, monitor to see how the reading is, and then check to see how much of ways understood or by making ongoing summaries either in one's mind or in the margins of the text(ibid, 182).

6.4 Strategies According to Place of Training (i.e., inside/outside classroom or strategies-based instruction)

1. Classroom-based and textbook-embedded training
2. Autonomous self-help training (Brown, 2000: 34).

7. CONCLUSION

The process, style and strategy are used in the literature on second language acquisition. The terms transfer and interference being referred to as strategies. The terms process and strategy are synonymous and style and strategy are often similarly inter changed. The individual difference variable of motivation, style and strategy are interrelated in numerous ways.

Students adopt certain style preferences succeed in finding learning strategies that particularly suit them; such actions may enhance their interests in the task and expectancy of success which will in turn increase their motivations with this task and ideally with others.

Teacher who keeps learner self-motivating strategies firmly in mind can check periodically to make sure that they are in the learner's repertoire and that they are doing everything to assist learners by keeping their motivational level high.

The style that contains more linguistic characteristics indicative of formal language use than some other style, one can only indicate relative differences between styles. The use of more or less formal style depends on a large number of closely interrelated factors such as the social status of the various participants in linguistic interaction, the nature of the subject matter the setting and the medium used.

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