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Exploring Vocabulary Learning Strategy Use of Iranian EFL Learners across Different Proficiency Levels

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ABSTRACT

The main pursuit of the present study was to investigate the language learning strategies Iranian EFL learners employed. The study explored whether there were differences in the choice of language learning strategies and proficiency levels of the learners. The study intended to involve 102 learners from pre-intermediate, intermediate, and advanced levels of English as a foreign language at Ava-ye- Danesh language institute in Ahar who were randomly selected among those who received language instruction at different proficiency levels according to the results of a placement test. The participants completed two sets of questionnaires, namely Background Characteristics and Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL) (Oxford, 1990). The collected data were computed and analyzed via descriptive statistics, and one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) and the Tukey HSD, LSD, and Dunnet T3 post-hoc test were used to determine whether any significant relationships exist among respondents in the use of language learning strategies regarding their language proficiency levels. The findings of the study were generalized as follows: There were statistically significant differences in the frequency of use of vocabulary learning strategies as for the proficiency level differences among learners. Results seemed to indicate a trade-off between the frequency of use of vocabulary learning strategies and learners' proficiency level, except for affective strategies. Furthermore, statistically significant differences were found in the six subcategories of language learning strategies, except for affective strategies, and overall strategies with respect to proficiency level.
KEYWORDS: SILL; memory strategies; cognitive strategies; compensation strategies; metacognitive strategies; affective strategies; social strategies.

INTRODUCTION

Vocabulary is regarded as the most important element to language and is of great significance to language learners. Theorists and researchers in the field contend that lexical competence plays a principal role in second or foreign language learning. Therefore, different types of methodologies have been elaborated upon to be used in vocabulary teaching (Hatch & Brown, 1995).

According to McCarthy (2001), Vocabulary forms the biggest part of the meaning of any language, and vocabulary is the biggest problem for most learners. So he has always been interested in ways of helping learners in building up a big vocabulary as fast and as efficiently as possible. O'Malley &Chamot(1990) believes that vocabulary knowledge in SLA is of paramount importance inasmuch as it is underpinned by schema-based approach to language learning, which deals with information processing. Information processing pinpoints on the fact that language learners can make use of their schemata, background knowledge resided in their long-term memory, to enhance their understanding and retrieval of new ideas by means of subsuming their newly-learned items to previously-existed ones.

Statement of the Problem

In spite of the fact that vocabulary knowledge is of utmost importance to language learning process, it is worth mentioning that no clear syllabus has been defined in Iranian EFL contextto help learners to get acquainted with vocabulary learning strategies. Likewise, relatively few studies havetaken into account the learners' proficiency level in using vocabulary learning strategies. Accordingly, the purpose of the present study is to explore different types of vocabulary learning strategies adopted by the learners in pre-intermediate, intermediate and advanced levels of proficiency.

1.1. Definitions of Vocabulary Learning Strategy

According to O'Malley et al. (1985), language learning strategies are any set of operations or steps learners use to help acquire, store, retrieve or use information with ease.

Bialystok (1978) maintained that language learning strategies are optional measures taken by learners to make most of information at hand to expand their language competence. He introduced four types of language learning strategies namely, formal practicing, functional practicing, monitoring and inferencing.

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Oxford (1990) specifically defined learning strategies as particular actions carried out by the learners which make their learning "easier, faster, more enjoyable, more self-directed, and more transferable to new situations."

1.2. Taxonomies of Vocabulary Learning Strategies

For Seal (1991) word knowledge is as an essential component of communicative competence and it is of prime importance for both production and comprehension in a foreign language. Knowing a word involves "knowing:

- a great deal about its general frequency use, syntactic and situational limitations on its use,
- its underlying form and the forms that can be derived from it,
- the network of its semantic features and,
- the various meanings associated with the item." (Richards, 1976 cited in G. Lotfi, 2007)

Accordingly, foreign language learners may use various strategies to acquire the target language word knowledge. Taking this into consideration, second and foreign language researchers have made various attempts to classify vocabulary learning strategies employed by foreign and second language learners. Instances of such classifications are the taxonomies proposed by some of the researchers in the field which are briefly discussed below.

According to Gu and Johnson (1996), vocabulary learning strategies are subdivided into cognitive, metacognitive, memory and activation strategies. They further contended that these strategies are classified into various substrategies based upon which cognitive strategies include competent use of dictionaries, guessing and note-taking strategies. Learners who are able to use guessing strategies bring their background knowledge into play and utilize linguistic cues to guess the meaning of a word. Likewise, they claimed that selective attention and self-initiation strategies are metacognitive strategies. For instance, language learners who make use of selective attention strategies decide to pay heed to specific parts of the language input or the situation that will help learning. Further, rehearsal and encoding strategies are types of memory strategies. Making a word list and repetition are memory strategies. Activation strategies refer to the strategies through which learners practically use newly-learned words in different language contexts. To illustrate, learners may put words into sentences for better remembering.

Rubin differentiates strategies contributing directly to language learning from those conducing indirectly to learning. Generally speaking, according to Rubin, there are three types of strategies applied by learners that contribute directly or indirectly to language learning as the following: (A) Learning Strategies, (B) Communication Strategies, and (C) Social Strategies.

A) Learning Strategies

Learning strategies, including cognitive learning strategies and metacognitive strategies, directly contribute to the learners' language development. Cognitive learning strategies refer to the steps or actions taken by the learners to deal with the learning materials. Cognitive learning strategies contributing directly to language learning are classified as the following: (a) clarification / Verification (b) Guessing / Inductive inferencing (c) Deductive Reasoning (d) Practice (e) Memorization (f) Monitoring. Metacognitive learning strategies are used by the learners to manage, regulate or self-direct language learning. Metacognitive learning strategies encompass such processes as planning, prioritizing, setting goals, and self-management.

B) Communication Strategies

Communication strategies are not directly conducive to language learning insofar as these strategies are used to focus upon the ways as to participate in a conversation or to communicate a message and elucidate the intended meaning of the speaker. To put it more plainly, communication strategies are utilized by the speakers to overcome their communication problems when interacting with others.

C) Social Strategies

By means of social strategies learners participate in activities by which they take the opportunities to expose themselves to and practice their language knowledge. These strategies provide exposure to the target language, but they contribute indirectly to learning since they do not lead directly to the obtaining, storing, retrieving, and using of language (Rubin and Wenden 1987).

The main intent of language learning strategies is to evolve communicative competence (Oxford, 1990). In the words of Oxford, language learning strategies are categorized into two broad groups, namely direct and indirect strategies. Direct strategies, as she puts it, are those strategies which are directly conducive to language development. Cognitive, memory and compensation strategies are regarded as direct strategies. Cognitive strategies, as an example, can be used by the learners to make sense of their learning, memory strategies to store information, and compensation strategies can be applied to help learners to overcome their communication problems. Indirect strategies, nonetheless, can conduce to and manage language learning without necessarily involving language learning directly. Indirect strategies include metacognitive strategies, to control and direct

learning, affective strategies, to handle emotional issues in language learning contexts, and social strategies, to enhance interaction with the target language.

1.3. Research into Vocabulary Learning Strategies

Vocabulary acquisition research to a large extentwas goal-oriented(what is to be learned) rather than process-oriented(how vocabulary is learned, the learning / acquisition process). In order to determine the efficacy of vocabulary learning strategies for language learners, researchers adopted different approaches (Erten& Williams, 2008). A great part of research on vocabulary learning strategies has aimed at determining the most effective vocabulary memorization techniques, developing taxonomies of strategy usage, and identifying the vocabulary learning strategy usage that distinguishes good and poor language learners. Other related studies have attempted to identify the ways in which 'good' and 'poor' learners approach learning of lexis.

One of the best known and frequently cited of these studies is Naiman et al. (1978/ 1996, cited in Ellis, 1994). This was a twofold study of highly successful adult L2 learners and adolescent classroom learners of L2 French, in which the first group was interviewed and classroom observation was done on the second group. Naiman et al. found that successful language learners use a mixture of analytic strategies for attending to form and experiential strategies for realizing language as a means of communication.

Gan, Humphreys, and Hamp-Lyons (2004: Ellis, 1994) conducted a comparative study of successful and unsuccessful learners of English in Chinese universities.According to the results of the study the successful learners reported having a systematic plan for mastering a particular set of new words. The successful students set particular objectives for themselves and identified systematic ways of achieving these. In contrast, the unsuccessful learners did not appear to have a clear agenda and experienced difficulty in identifying their learning problems.

Ahmed (1989), in a study involving 300 Sudanese learners of English, found that the good learners not only used more vocabulary learning strategies but also relied on different strategies more than the lower level learners.

Kojic-Sabo and Lightbown (1999)classified learners into different groups with regard to the vocabulary learning strategy. Learner independence and time were determining factors in the vocabulary learning profiles of the two most successful groups. The results revealed that the foreign language learners were more likely to utilize a review strategy than the second language learners. They also suggested that "time and learner independence were the two measures mostly related to success in vocabulary learning and higher overall English proficiency" (p. 176).

Schouten-van Parreren (1989) studied learners' proficiency levels and guessing strategies. The results of the study indicated thatin contrast to their high-proficient counterparts, the low-proficient learners tended to focus on the problem word and disregard the context; their lexical knowledge was more restricted; they had problemconsolidating knowledge from different sources; they lacked mother tongue vocabulary knowledge, and they had difficulty generalizing from words they had already learned to different new words.

The study by Ahmed (1989) found some evidence of a progression in strategy usage as the learners become more experienced. In addition, it was found that many of the strategies reported by the mature respondents as useful involved "deeper" processing and greater cognitive effort. Therefore, the mature learners seemed to realize the value of those strategies.

Bialystok (1981) carried out a study in order to identify and examine the effects of strategies on learning. She focused upon formal (formal practice and monitoring) and informal (functional practice and inferencing) strategies. Her hypotheses were that use of these strategies facilitates in learning a second language, and that the effects of the strategies are particular to the type of language studies. Based upon the results, Bialystok concluded that the learners noticed the importance of language learning strategies in their learning process, or for that matter, they could consciously know how to use learning strategies and assess their use of language learning strategies. Also, learners considered monitoring strategies effective for tasks which involve form, whereas they applied functional practice for all tasks.

2. METHOD

This study aimed to investigate language learning strategies used by the learners in Iranian EFL context, and sets out to seek answers to the following research questions:

1. Which vocabulary learning strategies are used most frequently according to perceptions of Iranian EFL learners at different proficiency levels?
2. What are the similarities and differences among EFL learners' perceptions at different proficiency levels in terms of vocabulary learning strategy use?

2.1 Participants and Context of the Study

The study intended to involve 102 learners from pre-intermediate, intermediate, and advanced levels of English as a foreign language at Ava-ye-Danesh language institute in Ahar who were randomly selected

among those who received language instruction at different proficiency levels according to the results of a placement test. Thus, the reliability of the study depended on an institute placement of learners at three different levels, pre-intermediate, intermediate, and advanced during the last three consecutive semesters. None of these groups was taught explicitly how to learn new words; that is to say, none of them had received any training in vocabulary learning strategies in their language institute – this first was established during meetings with the teachers involved before the questionnaire was completed.

2.2 Instrumentation

The instruments of this study involved two sets of questionnaires:

2.2.1 Tests of Background Characteristics

In order to understand the background and demographic information of learners, the current study intended to make use of a set questions to gather the data regarding the language proficiency level of the learners.

2.2.2 The Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL)

The Strategy Inventory for language Learning (SILL) (Oxford, 1990) was first designed as an instrument for assessing the frequency of use of language learning strategies by students at the Defense language Institute in Monterey, California. Two revised versions of the SILL exist, one for foreign language learners whose native language in English (80 items) and the other for learners of English as a second or foreign language (ESL /EFL, 50 items). It is estimated that 40 to 50major studies, including a dozen dissertations and theses, have been done using the SILL. Within the last 10 to 15years, the SILL appears to be the only one language learning strategy instrument that has been extensively checked for reliability and validated in multiple ways (Oxford & Burry-Stock, 1995, p.4).

In this current study, the ESL/EFL 50 items version7.0 of SILL was employed as an instrument to identify the vocabulary learning strategies the participants at pre-intermediate, intermediate, and advanced levels most frequently used, or for that matter the similarities and differences in the use of vocabulary learning strategies among learners at different proficiency levels .

2.3 Data Analysis

The Statistical Package for theSocial Science (SPSS) for Microsoft Windows 16.00 was used to complete the analysis of the collected data. The descriptive statistics, including frequencies, means, standard deviations and percentages, were implemented in order to investigate the demographic data, and the use of language learning strategies. Before running variance analysis, data were checked via SPSS to examine whether the assumptions of ANOVA were met. The values obtained from both Kolmogorov- Smirnov were within required levels to be able to pursue the analysis of variance. One-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) and the Tukey HSD, LSD, and Dunnet T3post-hoc test were used to determine whether any significant relationships exist among respondents in the use of language learning strategies regarding their language proficiency levels. In addition, the .05 level of statistical significance was set at all statistical tests in the present study.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

*Research Question 1:*Which vocabulary learning strategies are used most frequently according to perceptions of Iranian EFL learners at different proficiency levels?

Table 1 illustrated the participants' ratings of their use of multifarious categories of vocabulary learning strategies. The survey with items related to the strategy categories, Oxford's SILL (1990), was administered to three groups of learners at pre-intermediate, intermediate and advanced levels. For the first strategy category (Memory Strategies), the highest rating was identified for the learners in pre-intermediate level (2.95), followed by intermediate level (2.93) and as the least frequently used category among advanced learners (2.42).Regarding the second category, namely cognitive strategies, it was employed most frequently by intermediate learners (3.44), then by pre-intermediate learners (3.25) and advanced learners (2.88). The means of frequency of strategy use by the learners at different levels of compensation strategies were as follows: intermediate (3.43), pre-intermediate (3.23) and advanced (3.10). Likewise, the same pattern as that of compensation strategies were applied by the learners at different proficiency levels in using metacognitive strategies: intermediate (3.86), pre-intermediate (3.56), and advanced (3.37). The highest frequency in using affective strategies was reported by advanced learners (3.08), followed by pre-intermediate (2.88) and intermediate learners (2.85).

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics of Learners' Responses on Frequency of Strategy Use

Learning Strategies	*Proficiency Level*	*N*	*Mean*	*Std. Deviation*
Memory Strategies	Pre-intermediate	46	2.95	0.49
	Intermediate	36	2.93	0.62
	Advanced	20	2.42	0.55
	Total	102	2.76	0.58
Cognitive Strategies	Pre-intermediate	46	3.25	0.48
	Intermediate	36	3.44	0.55
	Advanced	20	2.88	0.72
	Total	102	3.19	0.59
Compensation Strategies	Pre-intermediate	46	3.23	0.63
	Intermediate	36	3.43	0.61
	Advanced	20	3.10	0.73
	Total	102	3.25	0.65
Metacognitive Strategies	Pre-intermediate	46	3.56	0.58
	Intermediate	36	3.86	0.55
	Advanced	20	3.37	0.89
	Total	102	3.59	0.66
Affective Strategies	Pre-intermediate	46	2.88	0.74
	Intermediate	36	2.85	0.69
	Advanced	20	3.08	0.81
	Total	102	2.93	0.73
Social Strategies	Pre-intermediate	46	3.40	0.69
	Intermediate	36	3.73	0.78
	Advanced	20	3.00	1.04
	Total	102	3.37	0.83

As for the use of final category, social strategies, intermediate learners with the means of frequency of (3.73) outperformed pre-intermediate and advanced learners with the means of frequencies of (3.40) and (3.00) respectively. As it can be understood both from the table and the findings above, a negative relationship existed between the frequency of strategy use and proficiency levels of the learners. To put it more plainly, with a minimal difference between the means of frequencies of pre-intermediate and intermediate learners in using memory, cognitive, compensation, metacognitive and social strategies, the result seemed to indicate that there was a trade-off between the frequency of use of vocabulary learning strategies and learners' proficiency level. All the same, the exceptional category was the affective strategies inasmuch as the data showed that advanced level learners preferred to use the affective strategies more than the learners in intermediate and pre-intermediate levels of proficiency. Likewise, this result showed that the negative relation observed between the other strategies and language proficiency level turned out to be adverse (positive) regarding affective strategies. The sets of data in Table 1 are delineated in Figure1.

*Research Question 2:*What are the similarities and differences among EFL learners' perceptions at different proficiency levels in terms of vocabulary learning strategy use?

Table 1 showed the results of the variance analysis conducted to determine whether the learners' responses differed in terms of their perceptions of strategy use at different levels of proficiency. Examination of values revealed that the learner responses were statistically different for all vocabulary learning strategies. In other words, the language learners receiving instruction at various levels perceived the usefulness of the memory, social, compensation, cognitive, affective, and metacognitive strategies in different ways.

Table 2. ANOVA Results of Frequency of Vocabulary Learning Strategy Use across Different Proficiency Level

Learning Strategies		*Sum of Squares*	*Df*	*Mean Square*	*F*	*Sig.*
Memory Strategies	Between Groups	4.373	2	2.187	7.073	0.001*
	Within Groups	30.606	99	0.309		
	Total	34.980	101			
Cognitive Strategies	Between Groups	3.966	2	1.983	6.216	0.003*
	Within Groups	31.582	99	0.319		
	Total	35.548	101			
Compensation Strategies	Between Groups	1.584	2	0.792	1.869	0.160
	Within Groups	41.949	99	0.424		
	Total	43.533	101			
Metacognitive Strategies	Between Groups	3.423	2	1.712	4.064	0.020*
	Within Groups	41.697	99	0.421		
	Total	45.120	101			
Affective Strategies	Between Groups	0.209	1	0.209	0.382	0.538
	Within Groups	54.828	100	0.548		
	Total	55.037	101			
Social Strategies	Between Groups	6.996	2	3.498	5.393	0.006*
	Within Groups	64.214	99	0.649		
	Total	71.211	101			

Another post hoc test was conducted to find out the source of the differences among the language levels. According to the post hoc test (Tukey HSD, LSD, and Dunnet T3) conducted on the memory strategies, significant differences were observed between the intermediate and advanced, as well as pre-intermediate and advanced levels; nonetheless, there was no considerable difference between pre-intermediate and intermediate learners. Examination of the mean scores of all levels for the memory strategies revealed that the means of the pre-intermediate (2.95) and intermediate levels (2.93) were very close to each other and higher than the mean of the advanced level (2.42). Specifically, whereas the pre-intermediate and intermediate learners perceived the memory strategies as helpful, the advanced level learners did not share the same perception. As regards the cognitive strategies, Tukey HSD, LSD, and Dunnet T3 test showed that all three groups' ratings were statistically different from each other. The mean scores of the learners' related responses supported this finding (P: 3.25; I: 3.44; A: 2.88). However, the advanced level's mean was below than those of the other two levels. According to the post hoc test results on the compensation strategies, significant differences were not found among the language levels (within Pre-intermediate and Intermediate). Examination of the mean scores of the first two levels showed (P: 3.23; I: 3.44) a positive difference in favor of the Intermediate level learners. This seemed to indicate that the intermediate level learners regarded the memory strategies as more helpful than the elementary level learners. Further examination of the mean scores (I: 3.34; A: 3.10) of the other two levels revealed a positive variation in favor of the intermediate level learners.

This finding related to variations of the learners' responses on the compensation strategies suggested that the intermediate level language learners regarded these strategies as more helpful than the pre-intermediate and advanced level learners. Regarding the metacognitive strategies, the mean scores of the pre-intermediate, intermediate and advanced learners were not very close to each other, the intermediate learners perceived the metacognitive strategies as more helpful than the other two level learners. The post hoc test showed a difference between the advanced and intermediate learners' reports as well as between the pre-intermediate and advanced learners' reports. The intermediate level learners (3.86) regarded metacognitive strategies as more helpful than the pre-intermediate (3.56) and advanced (3.37) level learners. Further, Tukey HSD, LSD, and Dunnet T3 test results did not indicate any substantial differences between the pre-intermediate, intermediate and advanced levels in terms of the affective strategies. In this regard, the mean score of the advanced level (3.08) was higher than those of both the pre-intermediate (2.88) and intermediate level (2.85) learners. This finding seemed to indicate the upper (advanced) level learners regarded the affective strategies as more helpful than the lower level learners. Interestingly, the post hoc tests identified most differences between the advanced and either the pre-intermediate level or pre-intermediate and intermediate levels. With regard to the social strategies, Tukey HSD, LSD, and Dunnet T3 test showed that the intermediate and advanced level learners' ratings were statistically different from each other. The mean scores of the learners' related responses supported this finding (P: 3.40; I: 3.73; A: 3.00). However, the mean scores of the learners at intermediate and pre-intermediate levels were very close to each other and the advanced learners' mean was below than those of the other two levels. According to the post hoc test results on the affective strategies, significant differences were not found among the language levels (within Pre-intermediate and Intermediate as well as Pre-intermediate and Advanced). Examination of the mean scores of the first two levels showed (P: 3.40; I: 3.73) a positive difference in favor of the Intermediate level learners. This came across as to indicate that the intermediate level learners regarded the social strategies as more helpful than the pre-intermediate level learners. Further examination of the mean scores (I: 3.3.73; A: 3.00) of the other two levels revealed a positive variation in favor of the intermediate level learners. This finding related to variations of the learners' responses on the social strategies suggested that the intermediate level language learners regarded these strategies as more helpful than the pre-intermediate and advanced learners. As for the overall consideration of LSD post hoc test in terms of the Oxford's (1990) SILL categories in general, results indicated that there were statistically meaningful differences among learners with regard to their proficiency levels and their pattern of language learning strategy use.

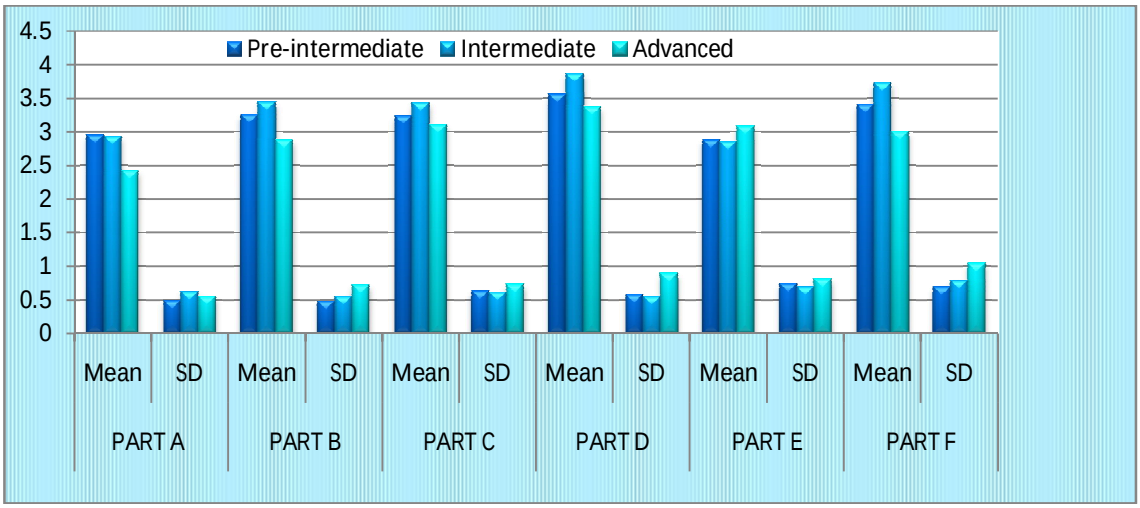

Figure 1. Mean Scores and Standard Deviation of Learning Strategy Use in terms of Proficiency Levels

The data analysis related to the learners' preferences for the vocabulary learning strategy use showed somehow a negative relation between the frequency of the strategy use and the language levels, except for the affective strategies, in that the advanced level learners' related preferences were higher than those of the intermediate and pre-intermediate level learners. The finding in relation to the most and least used strategies showed that while the metacognitive strategies were utilized very frequently by the learners, the memory strategies were not operated as much as the other strategies.

As regards the research questions posed in this study, the possible findings and discussions are summarized as follows:

(1) In general, there was a big difference among the frequency of each strategy that Iranian EFL learners report using, all in medium-use level. According to the rank order of the frequency of use, the most frequently used strategy was metacognitive strategies and followed by social strategies, compensation strategies, cognitive strategies, affective strategies and memory strategies.

(2) Regarding the participants' ratings of their use of various categories of vocabulary learning strategies, significant differences were observed. For the strategy categories the scale of the learner groups from top to bottom were as follows: Memory strategies(Pre-intermediate, Intermediate, Advanced), Cognitive strategies (Intermediate,Pre-intermediate, Advanced), Compensation strategies (Intermediate , Pre-intermediate, Advanced), Metacognitive strategies (Intermediate, Pre-intermediate, Advanced), Affective strategies (Advanced, Pre-intermediate, Intermediate) and Social strategies (Intermediate ,Pre-intermediate, Advanced). That is to say, (except for the affective strategies) there was a negative relation between the frequency of the learners' use of strategies and the rank of their language proficiency levels. Likewise, statistically significant differences were reported, except for the compensation and affective strategies, in the frequency of vocabulary learning strategies.

4. Conclusion

This study aimed to survey the Iranian EFL students' vocabulary learning strategy use. The major findings of the study were as follows. The data analysis related to the learners' preferences for the vocabulary learning strategy use showed somehow a negative relation between the frequency of the strategy use and the language levels, except for the affective strategies, in that the advanced level learners' related preferences were higher than those of the intermediate and pre-intermediate level learners. The finding in relation to the most and least used strategies showed that while the metacognitive strategies were utilized very frequently by the learners, the memory strategies were not operated as much as the other strategies.

The frequencies of the strategy use across various levels of language learners revealed statistically significant variations which seemed to indicate that the advanced level learners did not use the memory strategies as much as the pre-intermediate and intermediate level learners. Further, the intermediate level learners reported a more frequent use of the cognitive strategies than the advanced level learners. Furthermore, the intermediate level learners preferred to use the compensation strategies more frequently than the pre-intermediate and advanced level learners, the lower level learners (pre-intermediate and intermediate) exploited the metacognitive strategies more frequently than the high level (advanced) learners.

To conclude, the overall means of the language learners in relation to all items were approximately over the medium level. These relatively low means suggested that the language learners did not frequently use strategies, as well as did not perceive them as very useful. One of the main implications of the study was that the vocabulary learning strategy instruction needs to be improved. Moreover, language learning programs should be revised to promote teaching of vocabulary learning strategy use across all language levels since the language learners did not exploit some vocabulary learning strategies although they perceived them as effective. The researchers believe that an awareness of individual differences in learning can help EFL educators and curriculum designers become more sensitive to their roles in teaching and learning. Furthermore, it can ensure compatibility between teaching and learning in order to develop students' potential in EFL learning as well as to help them become cognizant of the ways they learn most effectively. It can also help students develop strategies and ways of becoming more motivated and independent learners. Understanding of language learners' beliefs of vocabulary learning and related strategy use would enable teachers and researchers to design appropriate materials and activities to help learners improve their vocabulary learning, hence to enhance their lexical competence.

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