

An Exploration of the Effect of Gender on Use of English Language Learning Strategies

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Abstract

This research investigated the similarities and differences in the use of English language learning strategies of 750 males and 1659 female students' from public and private sector students at the higher secondary level in Lahore city. Data was collected using two instruments, the Individual Background Questionnaire (IBQ) and Language Learning Strategies Inventory (LLSI). Chi square statistics was used to examine the associations between the subjects independent variables (gender) and dependent variable (individual strategies) belonging to metacognitive, cognitive and social affective categories. The results indicated that there were significant associations between gender and individual language learning strategies for all three categories of strategy use, metacognitive, cognitive, and social affective strategies under the different learning contexts, with females reporting greater strategy use.

Key Word: English language, Learning strategies and Gender differences

This article can be cited:

Kazi A., (2017). An Exploration of the Effect of Gender on Use of English Language Learning Strategies, *Journal of Arts and Social Sciences*, 1 (4)

Introduction

The last three decades have witnessed immense change in the field of language learning, especially with reference to second and foreign language learning and teaching. The focus of foreign and second language learning has witnessed a marked shift from the emphasis on teaching methodologies used by teachers to strategies of language learning used by students. While learning a second or a foreign language. They have identified a number of factors which affect foreign language learning. Of these, one very important factor is language learning strategies. This study is an attempt to identify the use of English language learning strategies employed by students of higher secondary school in Lahore city, and to present a profile of their choice of strategies. English language occupies a very important role in the educational system in Pakistan. Given the importance of English in Pakistan, language ability and student performance leaves much to be desired. Efforts to impart training to teachers in teaching of English, both, in the private and public sector, remain grossly insufficient. In particular, focus remains on methods of teaching, and learning style of learners, while language learning strategies are ignored. It is generally thought that teaching methodology would provide a remedy to the poor state of English teaching. In contrast, the communicative approach focuses more on language functions and not on structure. This approach views language learning from the point of view of learners. However, its focus is on how teachers teach and not how learners learn (Madrid, 2000). Research now demonstrates that besides methodology, other important factors influence the learners' language learning process such as the strategies used by them for language learning. Language learning strategies are viewed by Chamot as “procedures that facilitate a learning task” (2005, p.112). According to Scarcella & Oxford (1992, as cited in Oxford, 2003), language learning strategies are, “specific actions, behaviors, steps, or techniques -- such as seeking out conversation partners, or giving oneself encouragement to tackle a difficult language task -- used by students to enhance their own learning”. O'Malley and Chamot (1990) describe language strategy as “the particular thoughts or

behaviors that individuals use to help them comprehend, learn or retain new information” (p.1). They elaborate that, “learning strategies re special ways of processing information that enhance comprehension, learning, or retention of the information” (O' Malley & Chamot, 1990, p.1). Both definitions view learners' use of language strategies as conscious, specifically chosen and planned approach for improved learning. There are several factors on which research on second language learning has focused in the past few decades. Mikk et al (2008) have identified the focus of research on strategies for effective language learning over the years. These involved the identification and classification of strategies; learners' use and benefits accrued from them; variables which influence strategy use; and the benefits of strategy instruction on students' language learning and usage. The researcher has linked several factors that are related with second language learning. Learning strategies are affected by learning style, gender, nationality, age, and learner beliefs among others. The literature review explores the research on the gender and its influence on the learners in their choice of strategy use in second language learning. Language learning strategies are unobservable and therefore are identified through self report procedures. According to O' Malley and Chamot, “in cognitive theory, individuals are said to process' information, and the thoughts involved in this cognitive process are referred to as 'mental processes' ” (1990, p.1). Research shows that mere observation is not sufficient to identify language learning strategies. Various self report strategies that have been adopted by researchers are retrospective interview, stimulated recall interviews, questionnaires, written diaries and journals and think aloud protocols concurrent with a learning task (Chamot, 2005) Each of these strategies has its own strengths and limitations. Grenfell & Harris (1999) emphasize that the importance of language learning strategies is twofold. Firstly, a study of the use of language learning strategies gives insight into the cognitive, An

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metacognitive, social, and affective processes related to learning processes.

Secondly, these strategies, can be taught to less successful language learners, and assist them in language learning. One of the earliest and most comprehensive researchers on second language learning was conducted by O' Malley, Chamot, Stewner-Manzares, Kupper and Russo (1985).

Learning strategies according to O'Malley and Chamot (1990) may include: focusing on selected aspects of new information, analyzing and monitoring information during question, organizing or elaborating on new information during oneself encoding process, evaluating the learning when it is completed, or assuring that the learning will be successful as a way to allay anxiety (p.43).

Table 1

Learning Strategies by O' Malley and Chamot (1990)

A. Metacognitive Strategies:

They involve thinking about the learning process, planning for learning, monitoring the learning task, and evaluating how well one has learned.

These are: planning,

directed attention, selective attention, self-management, self-monitoring, problem identification, self-evaluation

B. Cognitive Strategies:

They involve interacting with the material to be learned, manipulating the material mentally or physically, or applying a specific technique to a learning task. These are:

repetition, resourcing, grouping, note taking, deduction/induction, substitution,

elaboration, summarizing, translation, transfer, and inferencing

C. Social And Affective Strategies :

They involve interacting with another person to assist learning or using affective control to assist a learning task. These are: questioning for clarification, cooperation, selftalk and self-reinforcement

Source: O' Malley and Chamot, 1990, pp. 137-139.

Research attempting to explain the relationship between gender and strategy use offer no clear cut correlations which can be drawn from them. Studies conducted by Ehrman and Oxford (1988) involving both students and teachers at the US Foreign Institute, found a very strong support for

their hypothesis that females use more strategies than males. Further researches report that females had greater strategy use as compared to males (Green & Oxford, 1995; Oxford & Nyikos, 1989; Sheorey, 1999). Significant differences have also been reported by (Politzer, 1983; Martha, Nyikos & Crookall, 1987, as cited in Ehrman & Oxford 1988). Their studies conclude that females use significantly more strategies than their male counterparts. However, Aliakbari and Hayatzadah (2008) report no significant gender difference among Iranian university students. Similarly, the study by Shmais (2003) on Arabic speaking, English majors university students in Palestine and found no main effect of gender on strategy use. Hong (2006) also found no gender effect on strategy use. In their study of Turkish undergraduate students, Hakan, Aydin and Bulent (2015) also found males to favour just compensation strategy, and report no other significant differences in both the genders. Thus differences may not arise due to gender differences but also other factors. He concludes gender affect maybe possibly more significant for children than adults. In the present study, the language learning strategies of male and female participants have been compared in the context of public/private sector, and also with the use of individual strategy items on the LLSI.

Statement of the Problem

Despite the significant role of English language, the standard of English teaching and student attainment remains deplorable in Pakistan. Research informs that language learning strategies are central to second language learning (Liyanage, 2004). Extensive research has been conducted globally to identify the use of language learning strategies by students of second and foreign languages. This enables instructors to understand the learning profile of their pupil and assist them in the process of language learning. Given the importance of English globally An Exploration of the Effect of Gender on Use of English Language Learning Strategies and in Pakistan specifically, no study has been conducted on the use of language learning strategies by students of English language learning in Pakistan. The research explores the influence of gender on the students' use of English language learning strategies at higher secondary level in Lahore. It is hoped that an

understanding of the students' preference of language learning strategies will highlight their unique attributes in the Pakistani learning context. This will serve to inform curriculum designers and teachers how to assist these students in becoming better language learners. In the light of limited research and literature in Pakistan related to the aspects of learning strategy of higher secondary school students, it is hoped that this study will contribute in these areas and also to the research conducted globally in the field of language learning strategies.

Method and Procedure

The proposed study is descriptive in nature as it investigates the use of language learning strategies in a different cultural and geographical context. Pakistan has a colonial past and English has played a unique role in this part of the subcontinent. The survey method has been utilized to collect data about the strategies used for language learning by students at higher secondary level. For this purpose, two questionnaires, the Individual Background Questionnaire (IBQ), and Language Learning Strategies Inventory (LLSI) were utilized. The questionnaires were translated into Urdu and both the English and Urdu versions were administered simultaneously to students of higher secondary classes. The results of the reliability analysis yielded an overall Cronbach's alpha level at 0.92. The most commonly used inventory, the SILL by Oxford, has been criticized by O' Malley and Chamot, (1990) on the basis of lacking a theoretical foundation. Although it is the most widely used instrument for ESL and EFL studies, they consider it to be a compilation of all the different strategies which have been offered so far. Criticism on SILL is levied by Dornyei (2005, p. 182), who finds it psychometrically flawed as the scales cannot be considered cumulative. The questionnaire used in this study is divided into five sections or learning contexts: listening in class in the target language (14 items); speaking in class in the target language (12 items); listening and speaking outside of class in the target language (9 items); reading English (16 items), and writing in English (12 items). The total number of items in the questionnaire is 63.

These items measure a total of twenty six strategies, in the above given learning contexts.

Moreover, these strategies are further classified as metacognitive, cognitive and social affective

strategies, summarized by Liyanage (2004) as under: Metacognitive strategies: advance organizers, directed attention, selective attention, organizational planning, self management, self monitoring, and self evaluation. Cognitive strategies: note taking, transfer, contextualization, elaboration, inference, summarizing, substituting, resourcing, repetition, grouping, deduction, imagery, auditory representation, rehearsal and translation. Social/affective strategies: questioning for clarification, self- reinforcement, cooperation and self-talk.

Of the total sixty three items, twenty items constitute the metacognitive strategies; thirty four items make up the cognitive strategies scale; and nine items in social affective scale. The target population of the study was students of class XI, and XII i.e. higher secondary classes, from public and private colleges in Lahore city. A sample size of approximately 2500 students from higher secondary classes was intended for this study. The method chosen for selection of the sample was multistage sampling. The participants were all currently enrolled boys and girls from intermediate colleges in the private and public sector. The total number of participants selected in the research comprised of 2409 students. Of these there were 438 boys, and 1130 girls from the public sector colleges and 312 boys and 529 girls from the private sector colleges.

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Results

Chi square statistic was used to examine the associations between the subjects independent variables (gender) and dependent variable (individual strategies) belonging to metacognitive, cognitive and social affective categories. As mentioned earlier, the instrument used in this research, the LLSI, investigates students listening in class, speaking in class, listening and speaking outside of class, reading and writing, with reference to English as a foreign language. Thus results first report the five learning contexts within metacognitive strategies, followed by the learning contexts within cognitive and social affective strategies respectively. The following section reports the use of contingency tables (chi square statistic) to examine the associations between the subjects independent variables (gender) and dependent variable (individual strategies) belonging to metacognitive, cognitive and social affective categories. Results which have a significant value of Chi square, $p < .001$ are reported.

Gender and metacognitive strategies. There were significant ($p < .001$) associations between gender and individual metacognitive strategies in all five learning contexts.

Listening in class. Two items of metacognitive strategy fall in this learning context, LC 1 (directed attention) and LC 13 (selective attention). There was a significant association between gender and reported use of directed attention, $\chi^2 (df, 3) = 30.85, p < .001$, Cramer's $V =$

.114. Similarly for selective attention, a statistically significant association was found $\chi^2 (df, 3) = 33.18, p < .001$, Cramer's $V = .118$. For both the strategies girls have reported relatively higher strategy use as compared to the boys.

Speaking in class. Five items from the metacognitive strategy fall in this learning context. Amongst these, no significant ($p < .001$) associations were found between gender and organizational planning (SC 1), self monitoring (SC 8), and self management (SC 10). However statistically significant results are reported for self monitoring (SC 2), $\chi^2 (3, n = 2392) = 25.88 p <$

.001, Cramer's $V = .104$, and for self management (SC 11), $\chi^2 (df, 3) = 23.26, p < .001$, Cramer's $V = .098$.

Listening and speaking outside of class. Four metacognitive strategy items fall under this learning context. All of these are reported as statistically significant. However, the effect size for all of them is small. Statistically significant results are reported for selective attention (SLOC1), $\chi^2 (df, 3) = 23.95, p < .001$, Cramer's $V = .100$; self management (SLOC4), $\chi^2 (df, 3) = 20.65, p < .001$, Cramer's $V = .093$; organizational planning (SLOC8), $\chi^2 (df, 3) = 31.40, p < .001$, Cramer's $V = .115$ and self evaluation (SLOC 9), $\chi^2 (df, 3) = 82.59, p < .001$, Cramer's $V = .186$. It is seen that for self evaluation girls (17% more) are more likely to use the strategy as compared to boys. Overall, girls show greater strategy use as compared to the boys.

Reading in English. Of the six strategies which fall under this learning context, four items (ER 5, ER 8, ER 10, and ER 15) are reported to be statistically significant. These are directed attention (ER 5), $\chi^2 (df, 3) = 41.21, p < .001$, Cramer's $V = .132$; advanced organizer (ER 8), $\chi^2 (df, 3) = 23.99, p < .001$, Cramer's $V = .100$; advanced organizer (ER 10), $\chi^2 (df, 3) = 21.38, p < .001$, Cramer's $V = .100$ and self evaluation (ER 15), $\chi^2 (df, 3) = 31.40, p < .001$,

Cramer's $V = .100$. It is observed from the results that girls report a higher strategy use than the boys for all the items, especially for the last two items where almost 10% more indicate greater strategy use.

Writing in English There was a highly significant association between gender and reported use of self evaluation, (EW 10), χ^2 (df, 3) = 54.77, $p < .001$, Cramer's $V = .100$ in this learning context. Both boys (76.8%) and girls (84.3%) reported using this strategy. However compared to boys, girls were more likely (about 8% more than boys) to report using this strategy always or usually. Two other item in this learning context report no significance statistically.

Gender and cognitive strategies There were significant ($p < .001$) associations between gender and individual metacognitive strategies in all five learning contexts.

Listening in class Ten items fall in this learning context. There was a highly significant association between gender and reported use of repetition, (LC 4), χ^2 (df, 3) = 51.42, $p < .001$,

Cramer's $V = .147$; translation (LC 6), χ^2 (df, 3) = 24.92, $p < .001$, Cramer's $V = .102$; auditory

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Representation (LC 7), χ^2 (df, 3) = 49.27, $p < .001$, Cramer's $V = .144$; summarizing (LC 14), χ^2

(df, 3) = 30.78, $p < .001$, Cramer's $V = .113$. It is observed that for repetition as a cognitive strategy while listening in class, girls were more likely (15%) more than boys to report using

these strategies always. Similarly with translation, auditory representation and summarizing as

cognitive strategies, girls were significantly more likely than boys to report using these strategies

always.

Speaking in class. From the five items that fall in this learning context, there was a highly significant association between gender and reported use of rehearsal (SC 4), χ^2 (df, 3) = 112.92, $p < .001$, Cramer's $V = .217$; substitution (SC 6), χ^2 (df, 3) = 27.14, $p < .001$, Cramer's $V = .106$; translation (SC 7), χ^2 (df, 3) = 19.71, $p < .001$, Cramer's $V = .091$ and contextualization (SC 12), χ^2 (df, 3) = 59.59, $p < .001$, Cramer's $V = .158$, while speaking in class. It is observed that both boys and girls report using substitution and translation as a strategy; however girls are relative more likely to report using this strategy. Moreover, it is seen that for rehearsal and contextualization as a cognitive strategy, girls reported a greater

preference (about 18% and 13% respectively) than boys.

Speaking and listening outside of class. Of the three items falling in this learning context, two are reported as highly significant. Of these inferencing (SLOC 5), χ^2 (df, 3) = 33.33, $p < .001$, Cramer's V = .069, and elaboration (SLOC 6), χ^2 (df, 3) = 29.75, $p < .001$, Cramer's V = .112, both are reported to be used more by the girls.

Reading in class. Of the nine items that fall in this learning context, six are reported to have highly significant associations with gender. From these repetition (ER 3), χ^2 (df, 3) = 32.01, $p < .001$, Cramer's V = .116; contextualization (ER 12), χ^2 (df, 3) = 65.58, $p < .001$, Cramer's V = .163, and elaboration as a reading in class cognitive strategy (ER 13), χ^2 (df, 3) = 50.30, $p < .001$, Cramer's V = .145, report a very high preference of usage by the girls as compared to the boys. It is observed that almost 15% girls report using contextualization more as compared to the boys. Similarly, for grouping (ER 6), χ^2 (df, 3) = 34.98, $p < .001$, Cramer's V = .121; imagery (ER 9), χ^2 (df, 3) = 65.58, $p < .001$, Cramer's V = .121, and summarizing (ER 12), χ^2 (df, 3) = 34.37, $p < .001$, Cramer's V = .120, statistically significant associations are found for gender, with girls showing higher preference of strategy use.

Writing in class For writing as a cognitive strategy three items out of seven are reported to be statistically significant. From these rehearsal (EW 3), χ^2 (df, 3) = 32.90, $p < .001$, Cramer's V = .117; substitution (EW 4), χ^2 (df, 3) = 22.51, $p < .001$, Cramer's V = .097, and translation (EW 5), χ^2 (df, 3) = 42.65, $p < .001$, Cramer's V = .134 are reported as highly significant. For all strategies it is reported both male and female participants report using this strategy, however girls are more likely to use them as compared to boys.

Gender and social affective strategies There were no significant ($p < .001$) associations between gender and individual social affective strategies with respect to listening in class and reading in class learning contexts. However statistically significant results are reported for speaking in class, speaking and listening outside of class and writing.

Speaking in Class There was a highly significant association between gender and reported use of cooperation, (SC 3), χ^2 (df, 3) = 65.35, $p < .001$, Cramer's V = .165, and self talk (SC 5), χ^2 (df, 3) = 58.86, $p < .001$, Cramer's V = .157, in this learning context. It is seen that for

cooperation as a social affective strategy in a listening in class context girls (15% more) are more likely to use the strategy always as compared to boys. For self talk as well girls (10% more) are more likely to use the strategy always as compared to boys.

Speaking and listening outside of class There was a highly significant association between gender and reported use of cooperation, (SLOC 3), χ^2 (df, 3) = 27.98, $p < .001$, Cramer's V = .109 in this learning context, with more girls (10%) reporting using this strategy as compared to boys.

Writing in class There was a highly significant association between gender and reported use of cooperation, (EW 7), χ^2 (df, 3) = 37.03, $p < .001$, Cramer's V = .125 in this learning context. An Exploration of the Effect of Gender on Use of English Language Learning Strategies The current study found that female participants from both public and private sector demonstrate greater strategy use, as compared to the male learners. Many studies conducted in the EFL context report greater use of language learning strategies by female learners as compared to male learners. Chang, Liu, and Lee (2007) report that female learners demonstrated significantly higher strategy use in the cognitive, metacognitive and social strategies. Oxford and Nyikos

(1989) found that females reported significantly greater strategy use on three of the five factors of the Strategy Inventory of Language Learning (SILL). It was reported that females used all strategies significantly more than the male learners, except social strategies (Lee & Oxford, 2008). Other studies (Ehrman & Oxford, 1989; Green & Oxford, 1995; Sheorey, 1999) also report higher use of strategies by the female learners. Shmais (2003) reports no main effect of gender on strategy use. Aliakbari and Hayatzadah (2008) also found no significant gender difference among Iranian university students. Similar results of no gender difference have been reported in other studies (Hong, 2006; Wharton, 2000).

Discussion

Gender and Individual Language Learning Strategy The results indicate that there were significant associations between gender and individual language learning strategies for all three

categories of strategy use, metacognitive, cognitive, and social affective strategies under the different learning contexts.

Gender and individual metacognitive strategies Seven strategies fall under metacognitive strategies, out of which all have shown significant associations with gender. It is noted that females demonstrate a higher strategy use for all the significant associations, in the different learning contexts. Moreover, it is observed that some of the strategies show significance under a particular learning context only. The results of the current study report that directed attention showed a significant association with gender in the listening in class context only, and not with reading English in class learning context. Selective attention is reported to be significant in all the contexts, i.e. for listening in class, listening and speaking outside of class and for reading in class. Female participants report a higher frequency of usage in all three learning contexts than the male learners. In organizational planning, results report that statistically significant associations with gender are found with learning contexts of speaking English in class and speaking and listening English outside of class. For speaking in class context when the teacher calls on the students in class, they plan their answer in their head before they say a word. In speaking and listening English outside of class it asked when the students know they are going to be around native speakers they plan a few things to say. However, associations between organizational planning and gender were non-significant in the English writing learning context where before writing, they make a plan or outline of what they want to say. This shows they are more interested in improving their speaking skills as compared to their writing skills.

It is observed that self monitoring as a metacognitive strategy shows significant association only for speaking in class learning context, whereas no significance is reported for another item (SC8) in the same learning context and also for writing in English. It is interesting to note that students report listening carefully to what they say and correct themselves when they make a mistake, whereas in the same learning context they report that when they speak they are generally unaware of any mistakes they might be making. Thus, it is seen that students know they make mistakes, but are not able to identify them; therefore they overcome this handicap by speaking carefully, and listening while they speak, so they can correct themselves.

Self management is reported to be significant for the strategy to try and answer all questions mentally, even when the teacher is addressing someone else, in the speaking in class context, whereas, in the same learning context it is non-significant where they volunteer answers in all class so they can practice using English. Similarly, self management shows significant associations with gender in the context of speaking and listening outside of class, whereas, in the reading in class context no significant associations are seen. All significant associations are with

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the females reporting frequent strategy use as compared to the males.

It is reported from the results of the current study that self evaluation is highly significant in all the learning contexts, speaking and listening outside of class, reading English in class and writing English in class. Similarly, advanced organizer as a metacognitive strategy is reported to have highly significant associations with both the items that fall in the reading English in class context.

Gender and individual cognitive learning strategies. Fifteen strategies fall in the cognitive strategy category, from which no significant association with gender were found for note taking, transfer, deduction, and resourcing. However, significant associations were found ($p < .001$) for the rest of the eleven strategies. Once again it is seen that females showed greater strategy use in all the associations which are reported as significant.

Repetition as a cognitive strategy showed significant association in both the learning contexts: listening English in class, where they report listening to the teachers' pronunciation and copying it, and reading English in class where they read the meaning of a new word over and over again to remember it. This strategy is reported to be used by almost 13% more females than males in both the learning contexts. This also reflects that females are participative in the class and do not have a passive role.

Translation as a cognitive strategy also reported significant results for all the learning contexts: listening in class, speaking and listening outside of class, and writing English in class. Auditory representation falls in the listening in class context and shows a significant association for gender, with 13% more females reporting using this strategy. According to Chamot et al (1987, p. 108), translation involves “using the first language as a base for understanding and/or producing the

second language.” It is seen that females prefer translation more as compared to the males. It also shows that females are more influenced by their mother tongue, and also get lesser opportunities to use the target language as compared to the males. For contextualization as a cognitive strategy it is seen that except for listening in class context, where when they hear a new word, they think of a sentence where they might use it later, significant associations are seen for speaking and writing English learning contexts. For speaking, females report consciously apply rules of grammar when they speak in English, and in writing as well they report that when they read a new word they think of other situations it might be used in.

It is interesting to note that students do not apply contextualization strategy in the listening in class learning perspective. This reflects the poor input they get in their language class, and their exposure to new vocabulary is through written text only. It also reflects that they are poor listeners. Similarly, their preference to apply rules of grammar is highly reflective of their teaching environment where rules of grammar are over emphasized.

In elaboration as a learning strategy it is reported that no significant associations are found for the listening in class context, where they try to relate what they hear to their own experiences or to information they already know. However significant associations are found for speaking and listening outside of class where they relate the English they hear in conversations to what they have learned in class. Significant associations are also found for reading in class context where they try to relate what they are reading to their own experiences or to material they already know. The reason why no significant associations are found in the listening in class context could again be related to the poor input the students receive.

For inference as a cognitive strategy, significant associations were only found for speaking and listening in class context in which learners if they don't completely understand what the other person says to them, think about the words they did understand, and try to guess what he or she might be saying. However, in the listening in class and reading in class context, no significant associations are found.

Summarizing as a cognitive strategy showed significant associations with females using the strategy more. In the listening in class context they report that they summarize whatever the

says, and for the reading in class context also they report that after they finish reading, they summarize mentally what they have read to understand it better. This shows the effort put in by the female learners as compared to the male learners.

Rehearsal as a cognitive strategy also reports statistically significant associations in both the learning context that it occurs. For speaking in class and for writing in class, females report higher use of this strategy. It is observed in the results of the study conducted by Liyanage (2004) that females used more rehearsal strategies in the speaking in class context, but did not use self monitoring in the same context. The results of this study report that the female participants report using one of the two self monitoring strategies that fall in this context. Liyanage (2004) in his results observes that “the finding that females tend to self monitor less and rehearse more the language needed may also make the females in the current socio cultural context come across as more talkative than males in their verbal ability,” (p. 203). The same interpretation may also hold true in the Pakistani perspective to an extent.

Substitution is also reported to have significant associations in both learning contexts, speaking in class and writing in class, with females showing higher use. Grouping as a strategy where learners when they read, organize information under different headings according to their attributes, is also reported to be used significantly more by the female participants. Similarly imagery, which falls in the reading context, also reports significant associations.

Gender and individual social affective learning strategies. Of the four strategies that fall in the category of social affective strategies, no significant associations between self reinforcement and gender are found. In the context of questioning for clarification, no significant associations were found for two items falling under listening and speaking and listening outside of class. In the listening in class context the learners ask the teachers questions when they don't understand what he or she is saying. For the speaking and listening outside of class learning context, the learners ask native speakers the correct way to say things. In the same learning context, females report asking for clarification where if they don't understand what the person says to them they ask them to speak more slowly or to say it in a different way. The reason for no significant associations for

the former two strategies could be that in our cultural perspective, asking questions is considered impolite and is not a norm. Moreover, the language input environment of the learners is poor where they are not likely to interact with native/proficient speakers of English. person says to them they ask them to speak more slowly or to say it in a different way. The reason for no significant associations for the former two strategies could be that in our cultural perspective, asking questions is considered impolite and is not a norm Moreover, the language

input environment of the learners is poor where they are not likely to interact with native/proficient speakers of English. It is seen that in two of the three learning contexts, female participants report using cooperation as a social affective strategy more as compared to the males. No significant associations were found for the listening in class context where if they don't understand what the teacher says they get help from a classmate. However, for speaking in class, and writing in class, they ask a friend for help.

Self talk is also reported to have significant association with gender, with females reporting using it more frequently than the males.

Conclusion

The results of the current study report higher use of language learning strategy by the female participants of the study, which is substantiated with other research (Ehrman & Oxford, 1989; Green & Oxford, 1995; Sheorey, 1999). Prior research reports that high use of language learning strategy is also demonstrated by the unsuccessful language learners, but they do not use them in coordination to obtain effective results (Lavine & Oxford, as cited in Oxford, 1992). According to Oxford (1993), the not so successful language learners focus more on repetition and translation. According to Oxford and Crookall (1989) good language learners use cognitive strategies such as translating, note taking and analyzing, and metacognitive strategies such as self evaluating, planning, organizing in a combination. Although the participants of this study demonstrate using metacognitive and cognitive strategies together, they do not report frequent

use of note taking and analyzing. The students' preference of translation and repetition as cognitive strategies, and less preference for social affective strategies, highlights the nature of language teaching in Pakistan. The teaching method is outdated and depends more on the grammar and translation method. A majority of the English language teachers are not trained as language instructors and are not aware of language teaching strategies. It has been observed that Pakistani students' English language proficiency is quite low and even after studying English for so long, are unable to write even a simple application, and often have problems coping with the demands of reading at the undergraduate level. Derakhshan, Tamaskani and Faribi (2016) assert “successful teachers use methods to understand their students' behaviours and learning strategies to help the students learn better and enjoy learning.” It has been pointed out by Liyanage (2004) that in colonial countries where English is not the native language, English language teaching is “product oriented, deductive, formal, teacher centered” (p. 218). However, in native English speaking countries, emphasis is more on communicative language teaching. Therefore, students from these countries also demonstrate higher use of social affective skills. It is hoped that an understanding of language learning strategies would help to improve the teaching and learning scenario in Pakistan's unique socio-cultural context.

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