Investigating Oral Communication Strategies among Sudanese EFL Learners: Gender in Focus

A.Elfadil Mahgoub Ibrahim Alzaiem Alzhari University

Abstract:

The study investigated the impact of gender on oral communication strategy (OCS) use among Sudanese EFL learners. To this end, 219 undergraduate EFL learners (97 males and 122 females) in three different universities (Sudan) were randomly selected as participants. Furthermore, the OCS inventory survey was used for data collection. The ANOVA results of the data analysis revealed significant gender-related differences in the use of overall oral communication strategies in favor of female learners. In addition, female learners excelled their male peers in the use of meaning-negotiating and social-affective strategies. Male learners, on the other hand, showed greater preference for accuracy-oriented strategies than did the females. The findings suggested a number of pedagogical implications for the teaching and learning of English for Sudanese EFL learners at the university level.

Key Words: Oral Communication Strategy, Gender, L2 Fluency

التحقق في إستراتيجيات التواصل الشفوي وسط متعلمي اللغة الانجليزية بوصفها لغة أجنبية في السودان بالتركيز علي الفروق بين الجنسين

أ. الفاضل محجوب ابراهيم أحمد - جامعة الزعيم الأزهري

المستخلص:

هدفت الدراسة للتحقق من تأثير عامل الجنس على إستخدام إستراتيجيات التواصل الشفوي لدي متعلمي اللغة الانجليزية بوصفها لغة أجنبية في السودان. لتحقيق هذا الهدف، تم عشوائياً إختيار(219) طالباً (97) من الذكور و (122) من الاناث للمشاركة في الدراسة من ثلاث جامعات سودانية. أُستخدمت إستبانة إستراتيجيات التواصل الشفوي كأداء لجمع البيانات. أظهرت النتائج وجود فروق ملحوظة علي أساس الجنس لصالح الاناث. ، كما اظهرت النتائج أيضاً تفوق الاناث علي اقرانهم الذكور في إستخدام إستراتيجية التفاوض حول المعنى والاستراتيجيات الوجدانية الإجتماعية. من ناحية أخري، أستخدم الذكور الأستراتيجيات التي تُركز علي الدقة اكثر من الاناث . قدمت الدراسة عدد من التوصيات التربوية فيما يتعلق بتدريس وتعلم اللغة الانجليزية بوصفها لغة اجنبية في المرحلة الجامعية.

الكلمات المفتاحية: استراتيجيات التواصل الشفوي والجنس والفصاحة في اللغة الثانية.

1. Introduction

Communication is deemed to be of paramount importance in foreign language learning for being the way learners experience the language. If learners experience difficulties, their language learning process may be disrupted. That being so, some learners tend to resort to learning strategies which are "the conscious thoughts and behaviors used by learners to help them better understand, learn, and remember the target language information" (Nakatani, 2010, p. 116). Communication strategies (CSs) are counted amongst these strategies, and they are exploited to resolve communicative disruptions and reinforce interaction in the target language (Dörnyei & Scott, 1997; Tarone, 1980). However, it has been upwards of 40 years since the first research effort in oral communication strategy (OCS) was carried out and yet OCS research is, as Skehan (1989, p. 98) points out, "still at an embryonic stage". This may be due to the extensive scope of the OCS area, which involves not only the learners' learning process, but also the relationship of their learning to other learner-related variables. A plethora of research has been conducted seeking to establish a relationship between OCS use and various learner-related factors,

such as gender (e.g. Wharton, 2000; Gavriilidou & Papanis, 2010; Vrettou, 2011), age (e.g. Purdie & Oliver, 1999; Psaltou-Joycey & Sougari, 2010), proficiency (e.g. Phillips, 1991; Park, 1997; Kazamia, 2003), motivation (e.g. Ramirez, 1986; Oxford & Nyikos, 1989), and prior learning experience (e.g. Jessner, 1999; Bialystok, 2001; Vrettou, 2009). However, most of these studies have almost focused on the influences of learners' use of OCS in English as a Second Language (ESL) context. In English as a foreign language (EFL) context, on the other hand, research into OCS has been conducted in South East Asia (Rahimi et al., 20080). The findings of these studies can hardly be applicable to EFL learning contexts of other ethnic groups (Wharton, 2000). There is therefore a strong need for context-specific studies to explore the potential factors which influence learners' choice of OCSs. There are a good number of studies in various EFL contexts, nevertheless; it was observed that there is a need for an investigation on oral communication strategies within the context of Sudanese learners of English as a foreign language. With these concerns, this study aims to contribute to the existing body of literature by investigating the effect of gender on Sudanese EFL learners' choice of OCSs

2. Literature Review

Oral Communication Strategies

The approach adopted by Tarone, Cohen and Dumas in their "A closer look at some interlanguage terminology" (originally) published in 1976) is firmly rooted in the tradition of error analysis: the analyst tried to account for the erroneous aspects of leaner language and does so by explaining these as the product of various process-level phenomena like transfer and generalization (cf. Selinker's five central processes' of L2 learning and communication, 1972). It is significant that communication strategies are not seen by Tarone, Cohen and Dumas as a specific way of communicating in IL, as is the case with later definition (as exemplified by the subsequent three contributions). Furthermore, communication strategies are related to the analyst's not the leaner's point of view:

it is irrelevant whether a specific item produced by a learner is in accordance with the learner's IL system or not, as long as it is erroneous compared to the target norm; in this case the item would be characterized as the product of communication strategy according to Tarone, Cohen and Dumas. Corder (1978) observes a clear distinction between learning strategies and communication strategies, a distinction which is further discussed in our contribution and in Tarone's paper. According to Corder (1978), learning strategies contribute to the development of IL system, whereas communication strategies are used by a speaker when faced with some difficulty to his communicative ends outrunning his communicative means, in such cases, the learner can either adjust his message to his communicative resources by adopting a risk-avoiding strategy, or he can expand his communicative repertoire through a risk-taking strategy. This characterization of communication strategies is further developed in our contribution, ' plans and strategies in foreign language communication' in which communication strategies are located within a general model of speech production and defined as potentially conscious plans set up by the language user in order to solve problems in communication. We suggest that a definition of communication strategies will have to be based on the research interests of the analyst and claim that the criteria of 'problem- orientedness' and 'consciousness' are relevant criteria as seen from the perspective of FL learning and teaching.

When we look at the literature, it is clearly seen that most of the studies focus on the definition of communication strategies and the effects of using them. However, investigating why learners prefer to use some specific strategies may shed light on the communication breakdowns and the reasons of the problems in speaking activities. With such a perspective, it can be claimed that some individual differences have a significant effect on the use of communication strategies. Based on these ideas, the present study aimed to find out the predictors of communication strategies by also examining the relationship between gender and OCSs.

Gender and Communication strategies

Gender has been reported to be an important variable that has an effect on learners' choice of strategies. However, how much and how gender influences communication strategy use is still open to debate due to the lack of consistent research results. Studies which have investigated the relationship between gender and L2 learners' use of strategies have arrived at conflicting conclusions. Some researchers discovered distinct gender differences in strategy use (e.g. Oxford, 1995; Kato, 2005); while others came to the conclusion that gender does not exert an influence on learners' preference for strategy use (e.g. Griffiths, 2003;Viriya & Sapsirin, 2014). Even when they share the view on the impact of gender on CS choice, there is a little consensus on how females and males differ from each other in their strategy use.

In his study, Politzer (1983) indicated that females use social affective strategies significantly more than males. Although the difference was deemed to be relatively minor, the conclusion was that it did "exist with regard to such variables as social interaction" (p.62). Politzer's result was corroborated by Green and Oxford (1995), who undertook a large-scale study of strategy use among 374 learners at the University of Puerto Rico. Green and Oxford discovered that females tended to use social and affective strategies more often than males. On the contrary, in a study by Lai (2010) involving 36 Chinese male and female EFL learners, no significant gender differences were found in the effective use of CSs. By and large, although contentious, a number of researchers reported significant differences between males and females in the use of strategies, with women's total supremacy in frequency and diversity of strategies.

3. Methodology

Subjects

A total of 250 learners were recruited from different three different Sudanese universities to take part in the survey questionnaire. Thirty-one learners were excluded from the analysis, result-

ing in a final sample of 219 learners (97 males and 122 females). At the time of data collection, the participants had about nine years of formal English learning experience: four years in basic education, three years in secondary school and one year and a half at the university level, and their age averaged at 21.2 years ranging from 19 to 23 years. The learners who took part in this study were undergraduates and were in their different years of university study.

Instrument

An adapted version of Nakatani's (2006) Oral Communication Strategy Inventory was adopted in this study. The OCSI is a self-rating questionnaire survey consisting of 38 items. Each of these items is an "I do..." statement (e.g. I try to speak clearly and loudly to make myself heard) which requires the respondents to indicate the frequency of its use on a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 to 5, with 1 never or almost never true of me, 2 generally not true of me, 3 somewhat never true of me, 4 generally never true of me, and 5 always or almost true of me. The adapted OCSI questionnaire comprises 38 items grouped into nine domains based on Nakatani's (2006) classification scheme.

4. Data analysis

Due to its capability to handle huge volume of data and conduct various types of analyses, the SPSS version 16.0 was utilized for the data analysis. Upon verifying that all of the questionnaire responses were complete and mistake-free, they were coded and fed into the SPSS for processing. Both descriptive and inferential statistics were used for data analysis. The descriptive statistics, including means, standard deviation, frequencies and percentages, were utilized for characterization of the sample in regards to gender and identification of patterns of CS use. To compare the extent to which CSs were used, Green and Oxford (1995) defined three levels of use based on the percentage of learners reporting high strategy use 4 or 5 on 5-point Likert scale:

1. If %50 or more of all subjects responded 4 or 5 on 5-point OCSI scale, the strategy was classified as frequently used

2. If %20- %49of all subjects responded 4 or 5 on 5-point OCSI scale, the strategy was classified as moderately used
3. If less than 20%of all subjects responded 4 or 5 on 5-point OCSI scale, the strategy was classified as infrequently used

Inferential statistics applied in this study intended to test the effect of gender on learners' mean CS use across the entire OCSI and in the eight categories as well as in each of the 38 OCSI items. The inferential statistics tests used in the present research include: One-way analysis of variance (ANOVA), post hoc tests, and chi-square tests. An important point to note here is that the minimum level of significance predetermined for the tests applied throughout the survey in this investigation is $p < .05$.

5. Results

In order to measure the effect of gender on learners' use of CSs, ANOVA tests were conducted to see if there were significant differences in mean strategy use across the entire OCSI and in its eight categories by gender. Person chi-square tests were also applied to check all items for significant variation. The ANOVA results in Table 1 indicated a statistically significant main effect for gender ($p< .004$). Mean scores for males and females were 2.98 and 3.39 respectively. These figures demonstrate that females reported significantly higher frequency of overall CS use than males. Although variation by gender was significant, the two mean scores for males and females fell between 2.5 and 3.4 (see Fig. 1), the range which Oxford (1990) defines as medium use.

Table 1: ANOVA Results of Overall CS Use by Gender

Gender	Mean	SD	Sig.	Pattern of variation
Male	2.98	1.08	.004	Female > Male
Female	3.39	1.00		

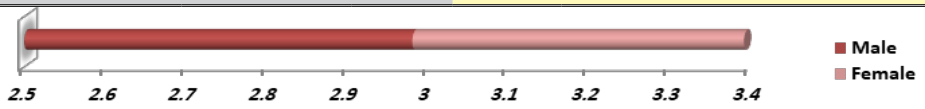


Fig. 1: Means of Overal CS Use by Gender

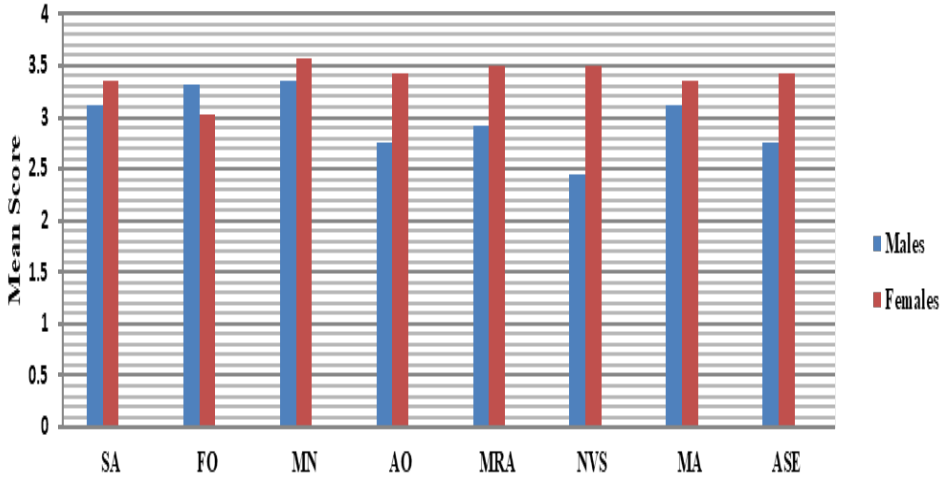
The ANOVA results in Table 2 demonstrated a significant relationship to gender for five of the OCSI categories; namely social affective, accuracy-oriented, message reduction, attempt to speak in English, and non-verbal strategies. With regard to these categories, female learners reported significantly greater strategy use than did their male counterparts except for message reduction where male student outperformed their female peers.

Table 2: Differences in Use of CS Categories by Gender

Strategy Category	Male		Female		Sig.	Pattern of variation
	Mean	**SD**	**Mean**	**SD**		
Social affective (SA)	2.76	1.29	3.42	.92	.000	Female > Male
Fluency- oriented (FO)	3.31	1.11	3.03	1.09	.062	___
Meaning-negotiating (MN)	3.35	.97	3.57	.99	.100	___
Accuracy-oriented (AO)	2.76	1.29	3.42	.92	.000	Female > Male
Message reduction and alteration (MRA)	3.57	1.13	2.93	1.06	.000	Male > Female
Non-verbal strategies (NVS)	2.44	1.01	3.50	1.08	.000	Female > Male
Message abandonment (MA)	3.11	1.02	3.35	.89	.064	___
Attempt to speak in English (ASE)	2.76	1.29	3.42	.92	.000	Female > Male

Looking closely at the data above, we can see thar meaning-negotiating and message abandonment strategies were, although not reaching statistically significant level, reportedly used somewhat more frequently by females and fluency-oriented strategies were used more often by males. One further finding demands attention is that female learners reported using two CS categories at a high rate of frequency: meaning-negotiating (with a mean of 3.57), and non-verbal strategies (with a mean of 3.50) and male learners, on the other hand, used none of the CS categories at a high rate of frequency. Such differences in the pattern of reported use of strategies are graphically depicted in Figure. 2.

Fig. 2: Means of CS Categories Use by Gender



The Chi-square tests indicated that eight of the 38 OCSI items, almost one-fourth of the total, were used differently by males and females. These strategies are listed in Table 3 and shown graphically in Figure. 3. Six of the eight items showing significant variation by gender were more frequently used by females, whereas two items were used more often by males.

Perusal of the data in Table 3 shows that female learners outperformed their male counterparts by nearly three to two in use of six strategies. These strategies belonged mostly to the categories of social-affective (Items 1, 2, 3 and 6 with x^2= 14.0, 43.0, 18.4 and

38.4 respectively) and one strategy in each of meaning-negotiating (Items 17 with x^2= 23.6), and message abandonment categories (Item 32 with x^2= 19.0).

Table 3: Items Showing Significant Variation by Gender

Strategy Items		% of High Use (4 or 5)		Observed x^2
	Female	**Male**		
Strategies employed significantly more frequently by female learners				
32	I ask other people to help when I cannot communicate well.	75.4	52.5	19.0
2	I try to relax whenever I feel afraid of speaking in English	67.2	30.9	43.0
6	I try to speak in English without being afraid of making mistakes	67.2	33.5	38.4

Strategy Items		% of High Use (4 or 5)		Observed x^2
	Female	**Male**		
17	I pay attention to the listener's reaction when I speak in English	63.1	42.2	23.6
3	I try to enjoy the conversation	43.4	21.6	18.4
1	I notice if I am tense or nervous when I speak English	30.9	20.4	14.0
Strategies employed significantly more frequently by male learners				
23	I try to emphasize the subject and verb of the sentence.	49.1	76.2	22.6

Strategy Items		% of High Use (4 or 5)		Observed x^2
	Female	**Male**		
20	I pay attention to grammar and word order during the conversation	40.2	75.2	28.7

Note: Critical value of x^2= 5.99 (*df*= 2), P <0.05

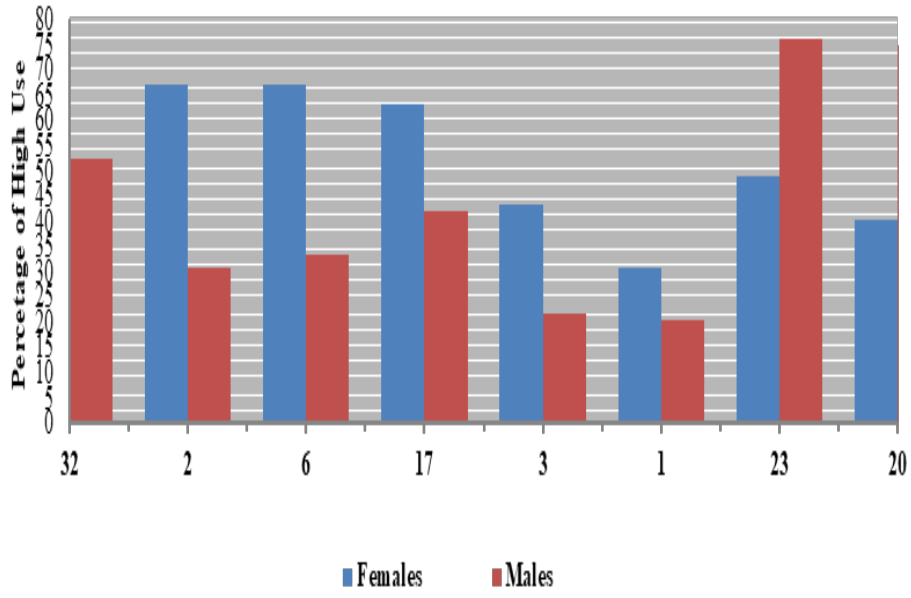


Fig. 3: Percentage of High Use of OCSI Items Showin Variation by Gender

As was mentioned earlier, there were only two strategies that male learners reported using significantly more often than did female learners. More precisely, male learners outperformed their female

counterparts by 27% and 35% in reporting high use of Item 23 (trying to emphasize the subject and verb of the sentence) and Item 20 (paying attention to grammar and word order during the conversation) respectively. The chi-square values for items 23 and 20 were much higher than the critical value (x^2= 22.6 and 28.7 respectively). This indicates that male learners had a significant tendency to use strategies involving analytical, logical thinking more often than female learners.

6. Discussion

The present study aims to explore the relationship of gender to OCS use. To start with, much research on gender-related differences has shown that females tend to use more strategies than males (Ehrman & Oxford, 1989; Oxford & Nyikos, 1989; Green & Oxford, 1995; Mochizuki, 1999; Peacock & Ho, 2003; Kato, 2005; Min 2012). The results of the present study bear this out, indicating greater overall CS use by females than by males. It may be that females are more eager to try out different tactics to enhance their communication ability compared to males. This explanation is further supported by Platsidou and Sipitanou (2014) who noticed that girls tended to outdo boys in self-reported scores of "various abilities, skills and personal characteristics" (p. 9). Tannen's (1990) remark that girls typically show greater enthusiasm and determination in learning in order to achieve social equality through education could partly explain why females use more strategies than males.

In terms of the eight OCS categories, the present investigation indicated that there were statistically significant differences in the use of social affective, accuracy-oriented, attempt to speak in English, and non-verbal strategies by gender in favor of females. This suggests that females can self-manage their communication and control their emotion, attitudes and motivation better than males and are probably more aware of what communication entails. Generally, females' supremacy over males was observed in various OCS categories across different cultures (Mochizuki,

1999; Peacock & Ho, 2003). On the other hand, there are some other OCS studies that found the opposite (e.g. Tercanlioglu, 2oo4; Zarei & Branch, 2013). For instance, in Zarei and Branch's (2013) study of Iranian university English majors, men scored significantly higher than women in all communication strategies, but not in social strategies, where both genders reported using these strategies at the same level of frequency. Differences in findings could be due to other factors that could be interrelated with gender like social and cultural contexts and the level of English proficiency.

At the specific strategy level, females were significantly superior to males in the use of 6 strategies (see Table 3) To be more specific, the strategies which females reportedly used more than males primarily came from the social-affective category, confirming the results for strategy categories in which they excelled. There were also two strategies which females used far more than males: paying attention to the listeners' reactions and help-seeking. On the other hand, male learners showed significantly greater use of two accuracy-oriented strategies (Items 20 and 23). The superiority of females in the use of CSs could be attributed to social expectations, attitudes and learning styles (Oxford & Ehrman, 1995). This implies that gender cannot be studied in isolation from other socio-cultural factors such as social status, ethnicity and religion that "cluster together to form an individual's self-identity at a given point in time" (Block, 2002; p.54). In other words, the social milieu wherein L2 learners study the target language gives rise to many expectations in the minds of parents, teachers and learners regarding L2 learning. The prevailing beliefs in the community about the value and worthiness of communication in the target language also affect L2 learning, including CSs.

7. Conclusion and Implications

The current study aimed to investigate the impact of English proficiency level on oral communication strategy use among Sudanese learners of English as a foreign language. Since up to date, a plethora of studies have focused on types and effects of commu-

nication strategies in ESL contexts. Nevertheless, it is thought that new insights can be contributed to the present body of literature within a different context; i.e., Sudan EFL context. With some distinctive findings, the present study yielded important results in terms of proficiency and its correlation with OCS use.

The findings in this study suggest a number of pedagogical implications and suggestions intended for the teaching and learning of English for Sudanese EFL learners at the university level. These are:

1. Proficiency and Strategy Use

The findings indicate a clear linear relationship between language proficiency and overall communication strategy (CS) use. High-proficiency learners tend to use communication strategies more frequently than intermediate- or low-proficiency learners. This suggests that as learners' proficiency improves, they become more aware of, and more comfortable with, employing various strategies to enhance their oral communication skills. Teachers and curriculum developers might consider integrating strategy training into language instruction, particularly for lower-proficiency learners, to help them develop these skills earlier in their learning journey.

2. Variations in Strategy Use Across Proficiency Levels

Significant differences were found in the use of six out of eight OCSI categories based on proficiency levels. The findings suggest that higher proficiency is associated with a greater use of certain strategies (e.g., fluency-oriented, accuracy-oriented, message reduction, non-verbal strategies, and attempts to speak in English). These strategies could be seen as crucial for advancing in language proficiency, highlighting the need to emphasize these strategies in teaching practices, particularly for learners at lower proficiency levels.

3. Social-affective Strategy Use among Low-Proficiency Learners

The finding that low-proficiency learners reported greater use of social affective strategies suggests that these learners might

rely more on strategies that involve managing their emotions, maintaining motivation, or seeking social support to cope with their lower proficiency. This implies that educators should consider providing additional emotional and social support mechanisms for low-proficiency learners, such as fostering a supportive learning environment and encouraging peer interaction and collaboration.

4. Implications for Targeted Strategy Instruction

The variation in strategy use, especially the use of social affective strategies by lower-proficiency learners and the diverse use of specific strategies across different proficiency levels, indicates that communication strategy instruction should not adopt a "one size fits all" approach. Instead, it should be tailored to the specific needs of learners based on their proficiency levels. Teachers might consider focusing on strategies that are less frequently used by lower-proficiency learners but are essential for language development, such as accuracy-oriented and fluency-oriented strategies.

5. Encouraging Higher Use of Underutilized Strategies

The results showing less use of meaning-negotiating and message abandonment strategies across all proficiency levels suggest that these strategies might be underutilized or perceived as less effective by learners. Educators might explore why these strategies are less commonly used and provide explicit instruction and practice opportunities to enhance learners' ability to negotiate meaning and manage communication breakdowns.

6. Designing Comprehensive Strategy Training

Given that 50% of the OCSI items showed significant variation by proficiency, it is crucial to design comprehensive strategy training that incorporates a wide range of strategies. This would allow learners to become familiar with a variety of strategies and choose the most appropriate ones depending on their communication goals and context.

These implications provide valuable insights for language educators, curriculum developers, and policy-makers to improve language learning and teaching practices.

References

(1) Bialystok, E. (2001). Bilingualism in development: Language, literacy, and cognition. Cambridge University Press.

(2) Corder, S. P. (1978).Language-learner language. In J. C. Richards (Ed.), Understanding Second and Foreign Language Learning: Issues and Approaches (pp. 71-93). Rowley, MA: Newbury House Publishers.

(3) Dörnyei, Z., & Scott, M. L. (1997). Review of empirical studies and theoretical implications. Communication Strategies in a Second Language: Definitions and Taxonomies, 16(2), 173-209.

(4) Gavriilidou, Z., & Papanis, E. (2010). The effect of strategy instruction on strategy use by Greek university students of English. Procedia-Social and Behavioral Sciences, 2(2), 3307-3311.

(5) Green, J. M., & Oxford, R. L. (1995). A closer look at learning strategies, L2 proficiency, and gender. TESOL Quarterly, 29(2), 261-297.

(6) Griffiths, C. (2003). Patterns of language learning strategy use. System, 31(3), 367-383.

(7) Jessner, U. (1999). Metalinguistic awareness in multilinguals: Cognitive aspects of third language learning. Language Awareness, 8(3-4), 201-209.

(8) Kato, S. (2005). How language learning strategies affect English proficiency in Japanese university students. Journal of Language and Learning, 3(2), 512-535.

(9) Kazamia, V. (2003). Language learning strategy use of Greek ESL learners: A cross-sectional study. System, 31(4), 523-544.

(10) Lai, H. Y. T. (2010). Gender effect on the use of language learning strategies in adult foreign language learners. Language Learning Journal, 38(3), 381-394.

(11) Nakatani, Y. (2010). Identifying strategies that facilitate EFL learners' oral communication: A classroom study using multiple data collection procedures. The Modern Language Journal, 94(1), 116-136.

(12) Oxford, R. L. (1995). Gender differences in language learning styles: What do they mean? In J. M. Reid (Ed.), Learning styles in the ESL/EFL classroom (pp. 34-46). Heinle & Heinle.

(13) Oxford, R. L., & Nyikos, M. (1989). Variables affecting choice of language learning strategies by university students. The Modern Language Journal, 73(3), 291-300.

(14) Park, G. P. (1997). Language learning strategies and English proficiency in Korean university students. Foreign Language Annals, 30(2), 211-221.

(15) Phillips, V. (1991). A look at learner strategy use and ESL proficiency. CATESOL Journal, 4(1), 57-67.

(16) Politzer, R. L. (1983). An exploratory study of self-reported language learning behaviors and their relation to achievement. Studies in Second Language Acquisition, 6(1), 54-68.

(17) Psaltou-Joycey, A., & Sougari, A. M. (2010). Greek young learners' perceptions about foreign language learning and language learning strategies. Language Awareness, 19(1), 47-67.

(18) Purdie, N., & Oliver, R. (1999). Language learning strategies used by bilingual school-aged children. System, 27(3), 375-388.

(19) Rahimi, M., Riazi, A., & Saif, S. (2008). An investigation into the factors affecting the use of language learning strategies by Persian EFL learners. Iranian Journal of Applied Linguistics, 11(2), 95-113.

(20) Ramirez, A. G. (1986). Language learning strategies used by adolescents studying French. Foreign Language Annals, 19(2), 131-141

(21) Selinker, L. (1972). Interlanguage. International Review of Applied Linguistics in Language Teaching, 10(1-4), 209-232.

(22) Skehan, P. (1989). Individual differences in second language learning. Edward Arnold.

(23) Tarone, E. (1980). Communication strategies, foreigner talk, and repair in interlanguage. Language Learning, 30(2), 417-431.

(24) Tarone, E., Cohen, A., & Dumas, G. (1976). A closer look at some interlanguage terminology. Language Learning, 26(2), 309-320.

(25) Viriya, C., & Sapsirin, S. (2014). Gender differences in language learning styles and strategies. Asian Social Science, 10(4), 66-71.

(26) Vrettou, A. (2009). Language learning strategy use in Greek primary school learners: The role of gender and proficiency. Journal of Applied Linguistics, 25, 57-73.

(27) Vrettou, A. (2011). Patterns of language learning strategy use by Greek learners of English: The role of gender. Selected Papers on Theoretical and Applied Linguistics, 19, 273-284.

(28) Wharton, G. (2000). Language learning strategy use of bilingual foreign language learners in Singapore. Language Learning, 50(2), 203-243.