

**METACOGNITIVE STRATEGY
IN LEARNING FRENCH AS FOREIGN LANGUAGE**

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Abstract

This descriptive research provides an overview of learners' metacognitive strategy in anticipating various changes in learning activities of IR 4.0 era. This research was carried out by looking at some similarities and differences in the patterns of learning strategies of students of FLE in three ASEAN countries (Indonesia, Thailand and Vietnam) with different atmospheric cultural and academic backgrounds. Digitalization in various aspects of life, including in education is inevitable in the Industrial Revolution (IR) of 4.0 eras. The development of technology in foreign language learning is also affected by the sophisticated technology and abundant learning resources that are available offered for various learning needs. The ability of teachers and students as users of technology needs to be improved so that technology can be applied effectively. It is undeniable that this development has a great impact on learning and teaching strategies. Student active learning approach is more prominent than the previous era. This evolution involves certain kinds of autonomy in the learning process. The study of the readiness of learners to face the era of IR 4.0 is critical so that it can lead to effective and efficient learning steps. How learners organize learning materials, determine priorities, and implement learning materials are what so called metacognitive strategies that need to be mapped in favor of achieving learning efficacy.

Key words: metacognitive strategy, French as foreign language, Industrial Revolution (IR) of 4.0 era

1. Introduction

Technology greatly offers conveniences in learning of a foreign language. It varies from the availability of various web sites, audiovisual documentation, and language learning tutorials, applications that assist learners knowing some expressions and finding the answers of any difficulties to formulate sentences. Learners are exposed as well with various quizzes and audiovisual explanations as if they were studying with a native speaker. Behind this sophistication and the availability of abundant learning resources, it is essential to address several issues concerning the acceleration and effectiveness of learning in addition to the various policy steps that possibly will set it out.

This phenomenon involves the autonomy of learning. Therefore the promptness of

the learners for this new era becomes an inevitable affirmation for the achievement of the efficacy of teaching and learning. The study has been formulated in the following problematic. Are there new steps in the learning process among students in the selection of learning resources? How do students organize their learning material? How do students determine their priority scale and how do students implement learning materials to master four language skills?

Responding to the above problems, an in-depth survey research on metacognitive strategies is carried out among French language learners in ASEAN countries. The research provided an overview of how the way the learners anticipate and implement various changes in their learning of French as Foreign Language (FFL). This research is also useful in determining foreign language

learning policies, especially French in ASEAN countries.

“Strategy” means a plan that is geared towards achieving a goal. The 'second language learning strategy' are specific plans or actions - either observable, such as taking notes or finding a conversation partner, or unobservable ones, such as mental analysis of 'a word intentionally used by second language learners to improve the reception, memorization, retention and retrieval of information. Learning strategies and learning styles that are related to broader approaches to learning, such as intuitive style - random versus concrete sequential style, or visual style versus auditory style, should not be confused.

The language learning strategy is a process consciously chosen by the learners. Cohen (1998) puts the relationship between the consciousness of the learners and whatever their learning strategy is. The essential is the element of consciousness, because it is the only factor that distinguishes strategy from another element of the process. The major premise is that language learning takes place if students take into account several potential strategies that they can use in favor of their language learning. This viewpoint is based on the fact that the best way to make them aware is to develop a language class based on learning strategy.

More classifications of learning strategies can be found on the typology initiated by Oxford (1990), Rubin (1989), and O'Malley and Chamot (1987,1990). For the past two decades, they have been trying to define and explain what language learning strategies are. O'Malley and Chamot (1990) have proposed different distributions and conceptions of learning strategies which fall into three categories that are more synthetic and rigorous than the others: cognitive, metacognitive and socio-emotional strategies. However, these categories may seem more insignificant and more diverted from the language class, although they are more operational and easy to run. Inspired by some findings in psychology and education, O'Malley and

Chamot (1989) postulate that language learning strategies fall into three categories: Metacognitive strategies, cognitive strategy and socio-affective strategy.

Metacognitive strategies involve thinking about the learning process, preparation for learning, monitoring or monitoring learning activities and self-assessment. (Planning, directed attention, selective attention, self-management, self-monitoring, problem identification, self-evaluation.

Metacognitive strategies involve reflection on the learning process, preparation for learning, monitoring or monitoring of learning activities, and self-assessment.

1. Anticipation or planning (planning).
2. General attention.
3. Selective attention.
4. Self-management.
5. Self-regulation (self-monitoring)
6. The identification of a problem (problem identification)
7. Self-evaluation

Much research has been implemented on how to improve second language learning strategies. In many surveys, efforts were carried out to teach students to use learning strategies which is called strategy training or learner training (Thompson & Rubin, 1993). However, studies that focused on the training of second language learning strategies have not been successful or conclusive. Training is only effective in different skill areas, but not in other areas overall, even within the same study. (Oxford & Crookall, 1989.)

Based on research on second language strategy training, the following principles have been tentatively proposed, subject to further study:

1. Second language learning strategy training should be clearly based on student attitudes, beliefs and expressed needs.
2. Strategies should be chosen in order to make the learners practice with and

support each other and so that they correspond to the task requirements, the language, the learning goals, and the learning styles of the learners.

3. The training should, as it goes, be incorporated into second language learning activities over a long period of time rather than in a short separate lesson taught briefly.
4. Students must have many opportunities to practice their strategy during language learning.
5. Strategy training should include explanations, documents, activities, brainstorming, and homework reference materials.

Oxford (1990) synthesized existing research on how the following factors influence the choice of language learning strategies used by learners: motivation, sexes, cultural background, attitudes and beliefs, type of task, age and second language stage, learning style, tolerance of ambiguity.

The main purpose of teaching and learning French as FFL is to make known a set of language knowledge and skills called competence and performance. In Chomsky's generative grammar, competence is described as the implicit, innate knowledge that everyone has of their language, whereas, performance is described as the manifestation of an individual's competence to use the appropriate speech acts in a given communication situation.

The second purpose of teaching and learning FFL is to equip the learner with communicative competence which includes, beyond the assimilation of the linguistic elements and the statements of the speech acts, that of all the components of the act of communicating, and of verifying, through the performance of the learner, that all these components have been acquired.

Research in psychology have showed that independent learners have characteristics such as: strong motivation, self-efficacy, that is, "confidence in one's abilities to organize and execute the action plans necessary to produce given results"

(Bandura, 1997: 3) and therefore an aptitude for agency, a desire to grasp meaning; a positive attitude; a need for achievement, and a combination of extrinsic and intrinsic motivation. Students are "extrinsically" motivated if learning takes place through an obsession with rewards (like grades or praise) that are not inherently associated with learning. In contrast, students are "inherently" motivated whether the reward for learning is the enjoyment of the activity itself or a hunch for performing the task. Motivation depends largely on the context, the people involved and the specific circumstances (Pintrich & Schunk, 1996). Rigorous performance anxiety dampens against autonomy and motivation, but mild anxiety can sometimes improve them (Young, 1998).

2. Method

This research was carried out during four months by looking at the similarities and differences of metacognitive strategy patterns of FFL learners of three ASEAN countries (Indonesia, Thailand, Vietnam) who have different atmospheric cultural and academic backgrounds. The population is 3 university students studying French as a foreign language. Respondents were represented by learners of French as a foreign language (FLE) at UNY and their partners of other universities in Thailand and Vietnam. The samples are selected according to the needs of the research: the students who enroll the courses of the FLE either the oral or written production, or the oral or written comprehension. The samples are students of French at A2-B1 level (intermediate) based on the CEFR levels of language. Given their hours of learning and the learners of the level considered intermediate are students of the 4th and 6th semester or higher.

Data were collected, Firstly, by direct observation in the FLE class of these three universities, to know the strategies used during the learning process. Secondly, through the survey using a set of questionnaires generated using the self-assessment grid. Thirdly, it was conducted by setting up a semi-structured interview.

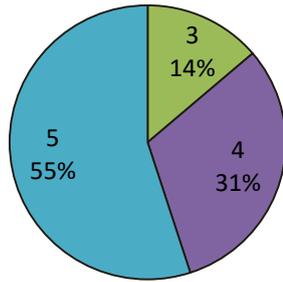


Diagram 2. Self-assessment

In general, there are some differences between Indonesian students and Vietnamese students in using the metacognitive strategy, especially those related to self-evaluation strategies.

1. 65% of Vietnamese students admitted that they often or always made preparations and planned to learn French language. Only 10% have never planned.

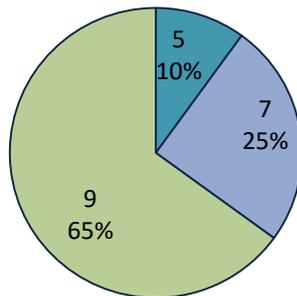


Diagram 3. Anticipation and planning

2. 57% of Vietnamese students paid general attention to their learning objectives, while 60% paid attention to learning the things they consider choices. students paid close attention to general tasks and special instructions before doing a task of learning French as they understand the general instruction, while others did it occasionally.
3. 60% of vietnamese students pay attention to particular French learning tasks such as documentary research and listening attentively, while 25% sometimes used this strategy but sometimes they did not

do. Only 15% did not do.

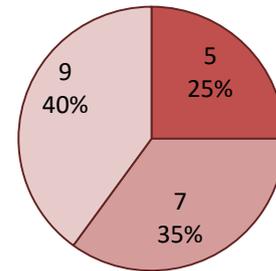


Diagram 4. Self-management

4. 40% of students considered themselves used frequently the self-management technique while 35% occasionally used the strategy. 25% did not care of that strategy such as additional subjects and course materials, creating a good environment, and using appropriate techniques for learning French.

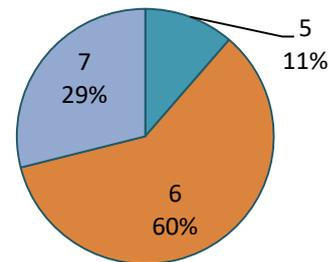


Diagram 5. General attention

5. 50% vietnamese students are frequently taking of their acquired aptitude technique while 40% only did some repetitions in some occasion as the self-regulation strategy.
6. 50% of vietnamese students regularly verified their problems of their learning French such as how to achieve the goal. 25% have did it occasionally.
7. 40% of vietnamese students frequently did not do the self-assess to know how are their learning outcome, eg. checking their pronunciation, examining their language performance. 32% did occasionally.

learners do not always use planning, control or evaluation in such linear way. The activities and planned behavior are probably carried out with different intensities and modifications. According to Anderson, many learners put as much effort into learning more effectively as it would take. Yet there are some learners who believe that it is better to give the planning and organization of their learning to the teacher or institution that offers them a well-planned program from the beginning to the end of the process of learning. It is considered as good way to achieve the learning goal. However, this situation ignores the learner's autonomy in terms of creativity, because learners expect precisely what to do and how they do it. According to Allwright (1990) in Oxford (2003: 76) learner autonomy relates to behaviors such as responsibility, willing to do, knowing the essential and willing to act.

The data shows that some respondents do not behave autonomously. Several indicators reveal this phenomenon. 46% Indonesian, 57% Vietnamese and 28% Thai respondents lend their learning to their institution. While 55% Indonesians, 28% Vietnamese, 55% Thai respondents do not assess them-selves. It is explained by the volume of their exercises and the tasks given by institution that pushed them to well prepare and forget to assess the way they want to avoid the poor or bad results.

4. CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATION

This research concerns the identification and description of the metacognitive learning strategies used by Indonesian, Vietnam and Thai French learners at the three universities teaching French as Foreign Language (FFL). Considering that most learning strategies are unobservable, the only way to know if students are using this or that learning strategy is by polling them, even though some strategies may be associated with observable behavior. Le résultat de la recherche montre que les étudiants choisissent et utilisent les stratégies d'apprentissage selon les situations et les contextes que l'on peut décrire comme suivant:

According to survey data, less than half of respondents occasionally engage in planning activities. It can be seen that some learners think about the importance of the purpose, planning, progress, or end of this learning process while others did not do. Activities and planned strategy are eventually carried out with different intensities and modifications. Some believe that it is best to leave the planning and organization of their learning to the teacher or the institution that offers them a well-planned program from the beginning to the end of the learning process.

The data also shows that some Indonesian learners did not prepare themselves. Several indicators proved this phenomenon. Only 46% of Indonesian paid attention to the learning organization. 55% of Indonesian respondents assess themselves.

Good language learners actually know what goals they are aiming for. In terms of speaking, the range of targets can be explained by mutual intelligibility which is the main criterion. Good language learners therefore do not neglect their pronunciation. They learn hard to pronounce FFL. They realized that this physical activity does not only involve exercises of the parts of the body (tongue, lips, vocal cords, lungs, etc.) but also the strategy of communication. It is true that some good learners develop the image of a good speaker of the French language as the goal of learning with good pronunciation, while others see from different way who thinks that communication is more essential. From this type of learner, we can see that instead of using a compensatory strategy in communication that advocates meaning, they puts aside the form of utterance.

Listening to spoken text is seen by good learners as part of communication activity. They didn't take genuinely care about mistakes or sounds they can't understand. They engaged in an activity that is extra-linguistic. They used a compensatory strategy by perceiving non-linguistic cues such as environment and social context or cultural cues. At the same time, they refer to

contextual information in order to construct hypotheses about the meaning of the audio or written document. Learners also used schematic knowledge to grasp meaning, and this includes knowledge about the linguistic rule in which speech is organized, as well as how the language is used in a given society, and factual knowledge of the language.

Metacognitive learning strategy is one of important aspect of language learning. This is a fact where learners become aware whether they are good learners or weak learners. As in other areas of language learning, learners must handle the task in an appropriate comportment. This implies readiness, organisation, learning management, motivation, a willingness to self-assess, even at the risk of embarrassing failure. By looking for possibilities of exposure to the target language, and by realizing that learning strategy is skill that relates to all other aspects of learning language, learners will be better prepared of different change in modern way of learning. By these means, learners will strive to achieve their various goals of learning, and to achieve their desired level of language proficiency.

There may be variations in learning strategy, depending on gender, age or social context. For instance, classes with a majority of male students may have a different strategy than a predominantly female class, and may require different types of activities that meet their needs. The key for teachers in planning education is to be aware of the multiple ways of learning.

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