

*SZILÁGYI LÁSZLÓ**

Language learning strategies used by successful and unsuccessful language learners in the process of learning English as a foreign language at the Transcarpathian Hungarian Institute named after Ferenc Rakoczi II

Rezümé A nyelvtanulás során megválasztott tanulási stratégiák fontos részét képezik a sikeres nyelvtanulásnak. Különböző technikák és módszerek alkalmazása, mint: találgatás, induktív és deduktív tanulás, az új szavak osztályozása, a célnyelven való gondolkodás, idegennyelvű kiadványok olvasása mind a nyelvtanulási stratégiák kategóriába tartoznak. Jelen dolgozat a II. Rákóczi Ferenc Kárpátaljai Magyar Főiskola angol szakos hallgatóinak a nyelvtanulási stratégiáját vizsgálja.

Резюме Стратегії для навчання, обрані в процесі вивчення мови, відіграють важливу роль в успішному мови. Використання таких засвоєнні техник і методів, як здогадка, індуктивне та дедуктивне навчання, групування нових слів, читання на іноземній мови – все це відноситься до категорії стратегій вивчення мови. Дана робота досліджує стратегії навчання студентів англійської мови в ЗУІ.

Introduction

The subject matter of this paper is strategies used by successful and unsuccessful language learners in the process of learning English as a foreign language. The paper presents a research carried out at a Transcarpathian higher educational establishment, the main aim of which was to find out which language learning strategies are used by the students while learning English. The importance of such a research lies in that language learning which strategies might be the key to the success of each student in the learning process.

Under the term 'language learning strategies' different techniques and methods are meant, i.e. guessing, learning both inductively and deductively, classifying new words, thinking in the target language, reading English publications etc. Researchers have mostly dealt with second language learning, although their results and conclusions can be applied to the process of learning a foreign language.

The early steps to the investigation of foreign language learners were the studies of Rubin (1975) and Stern (1975). The two researchers collected a number of strategies, which could discriminate between successful and unsuccessful learners. Researchers intended to construct a list of strategies used by the so-called 'successful or unsuccessful' learners. They considered that if a person uses these strategies, he/she can be successful in learning a foreign language, i.e. grammar, phonology, lexicon, historical events and cultural aspects. However, Abraham and Vann (1996) in their research proved that both good and poor language learners use nearly the same strategies as to their amount and kinds, but the problem is that unsuccessful learners cannot use these strategies in a proper way. Poor learners do not succeed in choosing the suitable learning strategies in a certain situation.

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Surveys by Horwitz (1987) and Wenden (1987) attempt to find out why students cannot choose the proper strategies, and which are those factors that influence their choice.

The aim of this paper is to identify and demonstrate which foreign language learning strategies are used by the first, second and third year English major students of the Transcarpathian Hungarian Institute named after Ferenc Rakoczi II.

An aim to complete four main tasks has been set:

- to give a short literature review concerning the topic of the research;
- to analyze the completed questionnaires as the main research tool;
- to draw final conclusions on the basis of the given results;

Short review of the literature

In language pedagogy there is a great interest in the way the learners find solution to learning problems. Early research dealt only with the classical linguistic categories, i.e. grammar, phonology and semantics. Some later pieces of work were related to the background of learners' reaction to a new language and to the way they act in problematic situations, for example test-taking. These studies lay stress on communication problems and the difficulties appearing while a learner tries to perform a task in his/her new language. Strategies, which have been studied and collected during the investigation, were considered to be useful in the process of learning, and being the basis for instruction (McDonough, 1999.)

The early steps to the investigation of strategies of second language learners was the highly progressive work of Rubin (1975) and Stern (1975). They both described strategies, which could discriminate between good and poor learners.

Rubin's (1975) work, titled *What the 'Good Language Learners' Can Teach Us* is considered to be the basis for the further investigations on the given topic. Rubin intended to find the key to the success of language learners through the strategies they use.

Good language learning is said to depend on three variables: aptitude, motivation, and opportunity, as Rubin (1975) comments in her article.

Aptitude is considered to be the subjects, which might not be changed easily. This point is very frequently a matter of discussion in literature. Some authors point out that language aptitude is "a relatively invariant characteristic of the individual, not subject to easy modification by learning (Carroll, 1960, cited in Rubin, 1975, p.2).

By strategies, Rubin means "different techniques the learner may use to acquire knowledge" (Rubin, 1975, p.3). She mentions seven strategies used by the good language learner (GLL). The first strategy is guessing. A GLL tries to find out the meaning of even unknown words with the help of context, their cultural background, or by trying to think in the way the writer of that text was thinking while writing it. Guessing is also based on grammar and lexicon. The second strategy in Rubin's list of strategies is communication and learning with the help of communication. The learners who are ready to communicate despite their mistakes, acquire the language more efficiently. The aim is to get their message across, it does not matter how.

The third statement about the GLL is that the good language learners are often not inhibited, i.e. they will ask questions, for example, the answers to which they may know, in order to learn new words or grammatical structures.

The fourth strategy is attending to form, i.e. inductive learning of lexical and grammatical patterns. The next strategy is practicing. The GLL often initiates discussion with people, who know the language the GLL is learning. Such a learner is a good risk-taker. The sixth strategy is monitoring. The GLL monitors his own speech and the speech of other speakers. The last strategy, mentioned by Rubin (1975) is attending to meaning. The learner who uses this strategy knows that it is useless to pay attention to every word in the text or sentence. He goes under the surface of words and sentences. He chooses some words, which are of most help to him, and does not pay attention to every unfamiliar word. Learners improve their knowledge through training and they dismiss the unfamiliar information.

All these strategies are connected to each other, and help the learner, who uses them, to see the whole picture, with background, association and under-surface information. Caroll (1966, in Rubin 1975, p. 8), suggests that “the most numerous kinds of association that are made to an item, the better are learning and retention”.

Strategies mentioned above will depend on some circumstances, such as “the task, the learning stage, the age of the learner, the context, individual styles, cultural differences”, as Rubin (1975, pp. 8-9) puts it.

In an article, Stern (1975) gives a list of more learner strategies. He points out ten strategies, as being “features that mark out good language learning”. The list is the following:

1. A personal learning style or positive learning strategies.
2. An active approach to the task.
3. A tolerant and outgoing approach to the target language and empathy with its speakers.
4. Technical know-how about how to tackle the language.
5. Strategies of experimentation and planning with the object of developing of new language into an order system and revising this system progressively.
6. Constantly searching for meaning.
7. Willingness to practice.
8. Willingness to use the language in real communication.
9. Self-monitoring and critical sensitivity to language use.
10. Developing the target language more and more as a separate reference system, and learning to think in it (p. 31).

There are a lot of similarities between Stern’s and Rubin’s lists of strategies. Both of them stress practice, using the language in real communication, trying to understand the context, empathy with people of another cultural background.

As to monitoring, Rubin mentions self-monitoring, and monitoring the speech and performance of the others, while Stern does not speak about monitoring the other speakers.

Another very important difference should be pointed out: in the work of Stern (1975) one can find that language learners have to think in the new language. With the help of it learners can identify themselves with the target language, the new cultural and social life.

Later on, with the developing of the science about learning strategies appeared a new term 'learner strategy' (Cohen, 1998; Wenden & Rubin; 1987, McDonough, 1999) as opposed to the term 'learning strategies'. The researchers wanted to pinpoint that learners differ from one another, and that they may have individual learning strategies. Then, a common question came into the surface of the problem: What motivates learners, when they use their strategies? What influences the choice of their strategies? There were a few investigations, which wanted to find the answer to these questions.

In the conclusion of his study Omaggio (1978, in Wenden, 1987, p.2) points out the strategies of GLLs, saying that a language learner has "insight into the nature of the task (of learning)". Hosenfeld (1978, in Wenden, 1987) mentioned the so-called 'mini-theories' of second language learning, i.e. each language learner has his/her own theory how to learn a language.

Wenden (1987) was one of those investigators, who stressed the background of the strategies, the so-called beliefs and assumptions, which underlie the choice of that strategies by second language learners. It means that some learners think one thing to be important and the others something else. The result of Wenden's (1987) investigation was that she divided the learners into three groups.

The first group stressed the importance of using the language. One has to visit places where one has an opportunity to communicate with other people. The best is to live in the country where the target language is spoken, and try to think in one's target language. Thinking in the target language was also mentioned by Stern (1975).

The second group indicated that the most important factor in the process of learning is to learn about the language. One could not learn a language without grammar, rules, teacher, and a formal course. These learners wanted to be led by people who were good at that second language, they wanted to be monitored by teachers. The second group was led by cognitive strategies, while the first one by communicative ones.

The third group said that the so-called 'personal factors' were the most important in the efficient learning process, that is the ability of the students to learn a language and also their attitude towards the given language.

Despite the differences among the three groups, there are a few similarities. All the learners take into consideration vocabulary more frequently than syntax, grammar and phonology (Wenden, 1987). Autonomous learning in Wenden's (1991) opinion means that learners are ready to take risk, they try to develop their language knowledge and take responsibility for their learning.

In their research, Abraham and Vann (1996) give a detailed list of strategies. They divided strategies into two large groups, cognitive strategies and communicative ones. Communicative strategies include past experiences, feelings, emotions, trying to express the message. When learners use these strategies, they just try to be a member of a large group, that is a group of people, who speak the same language. Cognitive strategies according to Abraham and Vann (1990) mean stressing on meaning and form.

On the basis of previous researches an investigation was carried out at the Transcarpathian Hungarian Institute named after Ferenc Rakoczi II to find out which strategies were used by the students majoring in English. The research instrument was a questionnaire. A pre-questionnaire and a final questionnaire was completed and filled in by the students and the results a given in the conclusions.

Participants

The students of the Transcarpathian Hungarian Institute named after Ferenc Rakoczi II, who are English-Hungarian, Hungarian-English and English-History, History-English majors, completed the questionnaires. The number of students who were asked to complete the questionnaire was eighty. Seventy-five participants filled in the questionnaires, so the return rate was nearly 94%. However, only sixty-seven were considered to be valid. The invalid questionnaires were not filled in properly, i.e. they were lacking information on the number of years of studying English and the number of hours the participants spent learning each week. Because data was missing, these questionnaires were considered to be invalid and were not taken into consideration when analysing the research data.

Fifty-seven females and ten males completed the questionnaires. The age range of participants was between seventeen and twenty-three years, with an average of 20.

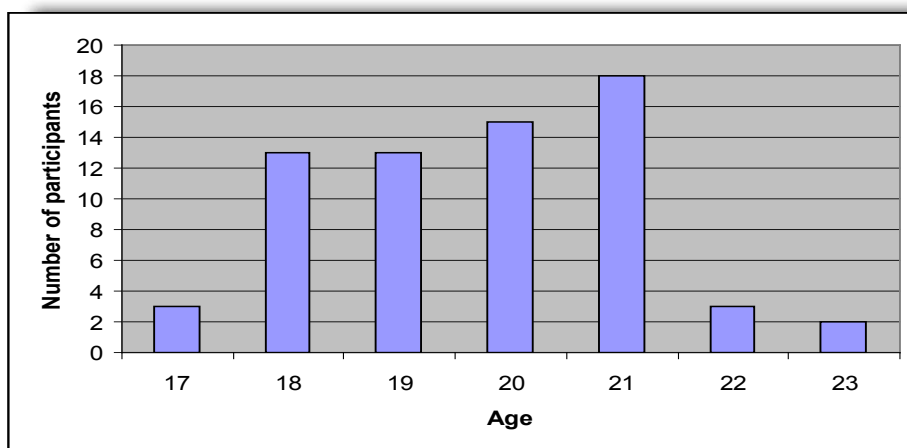


Diagram 1: The age range of participants

Research instrument

At the beginning of developing the field of pedagogy and linguistics which is connected with strategy-using while learning a second or foreign language research investigators collected a great number of language learning strategies, but nowadays they want to know according to what rules students choose such strategies and use them in given situations. The aim of such surveys is to help students to be more and more successful in the learning process. This paper intended to collect information about language learning strategies which are mostly used by those students of the Transcarpathian Hungarian Institute named after Ferenc Rakoczi II who are majoring in English.

The first group includes students graduated from college this year (2008) majoring in English. The pilot work was completed with their help. It was important to do the piloting to find out which are the most well-know and favourite language learning strategies in the college.

Students of both groups live in Transcarpathia, Ukraine. Some of them are from Beregszász where the college is situated. The others come from different towns and villages of Transcarpathia, e.g. Kaszony, Nagydobrony.

The first group (graduated students) was made up of students whose age ranges between 22 and 25 years. They were chosen for the pilot work because they had been studying English for a minimum of nine years (six years in school and three years in the college), and it was assumed that they use a lot of language learning strategies.

The second group (year I/II/III/IV students) completed the final questionnaire. The questionnaire which was used for piloting called the pre-questionnaire to distinguish it from the final questionnaire.

15 students filled in the pre-questionnaire (twelve females and three males). The respondents were chosen randomly from the graduated students, now studying at Uzhgorod National University.

A pre-questionnaire

The pre-questionnaire contains language learning strategies. This list of strategies was created on the basis of the literature which studies language learning strategies. It contains 25 learning strategies (see Appendix 1).

The pre-questionnaire consists of twenty-five statements which are connected with using language learning strategies. The pre-questionnaire was filled in by fifteen students from the first group (graduated students). There were twelve females and three males among them. The respondents were chosen randomly and they were asked to mark the strategies which most suited them. Having analysed the pre-questionnaire results for frequency of learning strategies used it has been decided which statements should be included into the questionnaire.

Each case of marking in the pre-questionnaire meant one point. At the end the score for separate items was counted (see Appendix 2).

The first statement has got the most points (15), and it means that each respondent thinks that it is positive if the person who studies the foreign language speaks with people who know the target language.

The second statement has got 13 points, and the seventh has got 11 points.. According to the first statement, a language can be learned more efficiently and easily in the country where the target language is spoken.. The seventh statement asserts that it is good if the learner's classmates and teachers correct his/her mistakes.

Items 20 and 23 in the pre-questionnaire has each got 9 points in which students totally agreed.. Item 20 affirms that learners recall the material they studied previously while learning the new material. Item 23 is about doing homework together with classmates helps students to learn a lot from one another.

Beside the above mentioned five strategies the questionnaire comprised eight more statements the numbers of which are 4, 5, 8, 10, 13, 17, 22 , 23. These statements (e.g. Swotting is not good in learning) got the most points. The diagram in Appendix 1 shows each statement. Appendix 2 contains thirteen statements that have got the most number of points. This number is presented for each separate item in brackets.

In summary, the first step of this investigation was the piloting. Its aim was to select these most well-known and most often used ones out of twenty-five strategies.

The results show that there were thirteen statements, which were marked more often, i.e. they were included into the final questionnaire.

The questionnaire

The questionnaire begins with a cover note in which the main aim of this research is revealed, i.e. to find out which techniques and strategies are used by the English major students of the Transcarpathian Hungarian Institute named after Ferenc Rakoczi II.

This introduction is followed by a number of strategies the learners have to choose from. A five-point Likert-scale is used to collect relevant data from the subject of the future research. With the help of this scale the respondents are asked to indicate whether they:

-strongly agree (SA), (5)

-agree (A), (4)

-are undecided (U), (3)

-disagree (D), (2)

-strongly disagree (SD), (1) (Seliger & Shohamy, 1990) with the items offered.

Mostly closed questions are used in this questionnaire. Closed questions are chosen because they are respondent-friendly and easy to answer.

Personal questions follow the thirteen statements. Participants are asked about their age and sex.

These questions are followed by the one, which asks participants for how many years they have been studying English. It is important to get information about the number of years they have studied English, because the more a student studies a language, the better he/she knows it and the better language learner he/she may be. This is also true for the number of hours learners study a language. The more hours a student spends learning a foreign language, the more language learning strategies he/she may acquire and learns how to use them appropriately. With the help of the next question, it is found out how many hours students spend learning English per week. They can choose from the following items:

-less than one hour;

-from one to five hours;

-from six to ten hours;

-from eleven to twenty hours;

-more than twenty hours.

Then participants have to decide how they divide the number of hours among English lessons, reading English publications and listening to radio and TV.

The questionnaire also collects pieces of information on whether participants want to continue their studies on the field of English or not. It is an interesting and important issue, because the learners who want to continue their studies might be more active in learning and try to use more and more language learning strategies.

The last item in the questionnaire intends to get information about how good the participants think their abilities are to speak, to write, to read and to understand English. The final questionnaire can be found in Appendix 2.

Research findings

The aim of this questionnaire was to find out which strategies were used by the students of Transcarpathian Hungarian Institute named after Ferenc Rakoczi II and to make conclusions if the learners were successful in the learning of English or not. The questionnaire also wanted to get information about what the learners thought of their own knowledge of English language and also if they wanted to continue their studies on English after graduating from our college.

The questionnaire contained thirteen statements and students had to evaluate them on a five point scale '1' meaning 'I do not agree with the statement' and '5' meaning 'I totally agreed with the statement'. The first statement was the following: "It is important to speak with English native speakers". This item got four points from twelve participants and five points from fifty-four ones. The learners mostly agreed with this statement.

The second item was: "A language can be learnt more efficiently in the place where the given language is spoken". Only five students did not agree with this statement, they gave two points for this item, forty-three participants totally agreed with this statement, i.e. they gave five points and nineteen participants gave four points, so participants liked this belief.

The next statement intended to get information on whether students prepare their home-work with their classmates, so they can learn a lot of things from each other. Six students did not agree with this fact at all, i.e. he circled number one on the scale. Nine subjects thought nearly the same, so they gave two points. Seven participants gave three points, i.e. they neither agreed nor disagreed. Twenty-three participants estimated it to four points, and twenty-two gave maximum points to this item. It is a very good score and it means that students frequently do their home-work together in the aim of learning from one another.

The fourth statement, i.e. "A foreign language cannot be studied without grammar rules" received only one minimum point and fourteen students gave two points. Twelve learners were not able to decide whether this item was true for them or not so they circled number three on the scale. Twenty-four students estimated it to four points and sixteen participants agreed with this statement. It is a quite good result, i.e. most of the participants agreed with this strategy.

The following statement declared that it was proper that teachers and classmates corrected the students' mistakes. There was only one participant who did not think it to be true and gave two points. Ten students agreed with it partially. The rest of them considered it being important, i.e. thirty-two students appreciated it to four points and the rest to five points. It is also a high score and it is seen that learners think it to be important and correct each other's mistakes.

Then, item six in the questionnaire pointed out that "while reading a text I concentrate on essential words and do not look up each unknown word in the dictionary. I try to guess the meaning of the text with the help of familiar words". One participant did not agree with this fact at all, i.e. he/she marked point one, and twelve students gave only two points to this item. Three students could not decide whether it was true or not, it means three points. Twenty-eight participants thought that it was nearly true for them and only nineteen of them totally agreed with it.. This statement got very low scores so learners did not make use of guessing as a language learning strategy.

The seventh statement pointed out that swotting was not a positive issue in the learning process. Only four participants did not agree with it and gave two points, nobody of them gave one point to this item. Six students did not know whether it was useful or not, i.e. it meant three points. Thirty-two of the participants totally agreed with this fact, and the rest estimated it to four points.

The following item declared that "I often listen to English cassettes or watch English programs on TV". Two participants thought it to be absolutely untrue for them, and twenty-two other ones thought nearly the same, i.e. it was somewhat true for them.. Twenty-seven students thought that it was partially typical of them. Only eight students decided it to be absolutely true, which is quite few because listening is one of the main skills while learning a foreign language.

The ninth pointed out that imagination was a great help for the student during learning. Seven participants used their imagination quite rarely, which meant two points. There were four students who do not use their imagination at all. Only sixteen of the participants decided this statement to be totally true and characteristic of them. The rest of them gave four points to this statement. It is a low score taking into consideration the great importance of this skill.

The following item asked whether the participants were ready to speak even if they make mistakes. At this point there was only one student disagreed totally and twenty-two participants appreciated it totally and gave five points. Thirty-five students agreed and gave four points

Item eleven asked whether learners while learning new material recalled what they had learnt about it before. There were only four participants who never did it, and there were only three students who gave two points. Eleven learners could not decide whether to agree or disagree with this assertion. Most students, i.e. thirty gave four points to it, and nineteen participants marked point five. It means that learners realized the importance of making a good basis and then to build up and develop their knowledge.

The following item stated "After having learnt the material I check how well I know it". There were only three participants who estimated this item to one point and nine participants gave two points to it. The others agreed with it, i.e. nine participants were on the half-way between to agree or not, twenty-eight students marked point four and eighteen students felt that this assertion was totally typical of them. It indicates that learners want to do a good work and they are interested in the way they can study the new material.

The last statement declared that "I often read English publications because in such a way I can enrich my vocabulary". Thirty-two participants agreed with it but not maximally, i.e. it meant four points. Twenty-one participants agreed with it partially, i.e. they gave three points to this statement. Ten participants appreciated it to five points. The mean was high and it is not a surprise because this is always emphasized by teachers.

The thirteen above mentioned statements are followed by questions about age and sex. These data are discussed in the part about the participants. Students were also asked about the number of years they have been studying English as a foreign language. The diagram below shows the results, i.e. seven participants have been studied English for eight years, sixteen for nine years, fourteen for ten years. Two students have been studied English for five and four for seven years. Only six of the participants have been learning English for twelve years. Fortunately, only one

learner has been doing it for three years and one participant for thirteen, fifteen, and sixteen. This great difference may be connected with the difficult schools participants students graduated from.

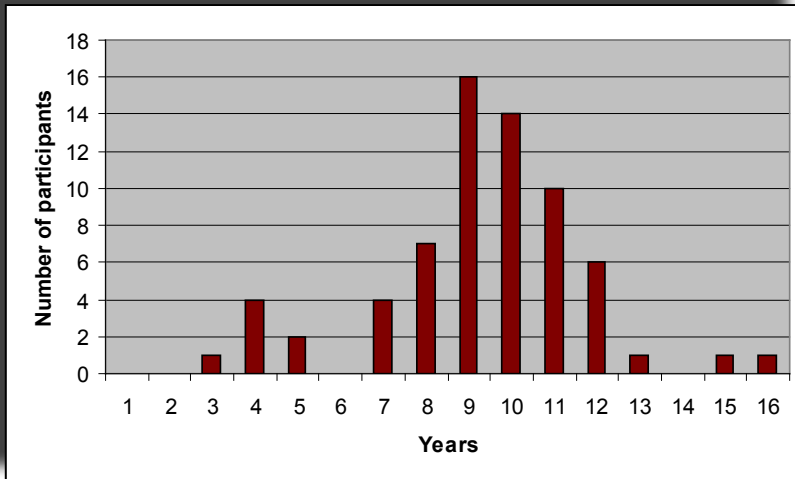


Diagram 2. Number of years of learning English by participants (n=2)

Next item asked the number of hours participants spend learning English a week.

Ten participants study English for less than five hours a week. Forty-nine students spend from six to ten hours learning this language, and none of them studies more than twenty hours a week. Nine participants spend from eleven to twenty hours a week learning English. The results show that learners spend quite a lot of time learning English and only ten of them are lagging behind.

Participants were also requested to mark how many hours they spend at English lessons, reading in English and listening to the radio or TV. They spend approximately 70.1% of their time at English lessons, about 16.4% reading English publications and only about 13.4% listening and watching English programmes. It shows that learners are not ready to work alone without their teachers and classmates, so teachers have to encourage them to be more keen and risk-taking because they cannot improve their knowledge without individual work.

The next question found out that sixty participants wanted to continue their studies at English. It is interesting because those ones who want to continue their studies may be more successful or more active in the learning process.

The last item asked information about students' perceived ability to speak, read, write and understand English.

As to speaking, 31,3% of the participants thought that they were good at speaking, 57% of them believe they were good at writing, 67,1% at reading, but only 30% considered themselves to be good at understanding. The categories 'unsatisfactory' and 'excellent' got only few points. The category 'satisfactory' was very popular particularly at speaking 49,2%, and understanding 48%. Most of the students perceived themselves being average or good at the above mentioned four skills.

It could happen because on one hand people do not want to look self-concerned, so they do not mark point five even if they think they are quite good at some skills. On the other hand they are afraid to look uneducated and foolish, so they usually do not mark point one or two.

Discussion and interpretation of results.

The results of this research show that students mostly agree with statements given in the questionnaire. These statements are strategies of successful learners, so the more often the participants use them and consider them to be true the more successful they might be.

Five strategies were the most popular among learners, i.e. they got more than four points. They are connected with speaking to foreign people and living among them, checking mistakes by teachers and other students on the lessons, learning rules and reading English publications. It is not a surprise, because teachers often tell students that these things are important in the learning process. The most points were given to the first statement (see Appendix 4). Learners believe that one can learn a language easily and perfectly if one speaks to native speakers. It might be connected also with their wish to travel to foreign countries where the economical situation is much better than in this country.

Inductive learning was also appreciated by participants, i.e. first learning rules and then the examples. Learning the rules sometimes can be boring or too difficult to study and understand, although without them learners are not able to make the basis of their knowledge. However, this thesis did not have an aim to decide whether learners prefer inductive or deductive learning.

The next group of strategies was between 3.7 to about 4 points. There are four statements with these scores. Learners did not agree with swotting, but agreed with listening to English cassettes and radio programmes, recollecting previous materials while learning a topic and also checking the results while learning new material.

Swotting is a usually disapproved technique, not only in learning a foreign language because if a student has short-term memory he/she will not remember it for a long period.

Listening to English programmes is very useful but students are usually not good at listening comprehension. In fact, it is not easy to learn how to understand a speech of a foreigner because one does not have only to translate the word and sentences but to catch the meaning of the whole information. If a learner cannot understand the beginning of the speech, he/she may give it up.

It was very interesting that students pointed out the importance of recollecting and reminding previous knowledge connected with the material they were learning. In fact, students learn a great many pieces of new information and they forget them very quickly, however, this statement got nearly four points. It means that learners at least think it to be important.

Guessing is an essential point because without it learners all the time have to use dictionaries and so they read a text quite slowly. In this way the main idea of the text can be grasped with difficulties. The mean score for this strategy is rather low, but it might happen because the participants are not very experienced yet.

Using imagination did not get many scores, either, although it can be a very good alternative to swotting. Learners can imagine stories, pictures and feelings while learning new words and even grammar rules. Finding different associations can make the learning process easier and much more interesting.

The least scores were given to the statement which intended to know whether learners ask each other which strategies/methods they used while learning English. It reveals that students use strategies, but they do not do it deliberately and speak about it rarely if only they do it at all. Students are usually told what to learn but very rarely how to do it.

In summary, the participants do use these strategies while learning English, although there are methods which are more famous and well-known, i.e. speaking with native speakers and living in English-speaking countries, reading English, learning rules of English language. These aspects are emphasized by teachers, books and mass media.

The things which need more attention are guessing, using imagination in the learning process, concentrating on the main things while reading a text and at the end learn more and more strategies and do it consciously with the help of teachers and student mates.

The research points out that the learners of the Transcarpathian Hungarian Institute are mostly successful. However, they need to acquire more and more alternative solutions and develop their strategy-using skills.

These findings are not generalisable, because the sample was only sixty-seven participants, so they are true only for this college.

Conclusion

Language learning strategies are important issues in pedagogy, because they can help students to be more successful in the learning process of a foreign language. All learners use some strategies, but they have to study to use them in a proper way. This thesis gives a sort literary review to demonstrate the developing of this branch of science which studies learning strategies used by students in the process of learning.

A questionnaire was prepared to find out the strategies used by the learners of Transcarpathian Hungarian Institute named after Ferenc Rakoczi II. The questionnaire is based on a pre-questionnaire, that is a pilot work, which was completed with the help of graduated students of English faculties now studying in Uzhgorod National University.

The final questionnaire was completed by year I, II, III, and IV English majors. The participants were asked to mark if they agree with the statements of the questionnaire or not. The results show that there are strategies and beliefs which are appreciated by participants, i.e. speaking with English people, visiting English speaking countries, reading English books and newspapers. It was not a great surprise because these aspects are quite popular and emphasized during the whole learning process.

Among the strategies which were marked as unuseful were guessing while learning new material and not translating each unknown word, using imagination

during learning and speaking about the strategies used by the other learners. These are the points which need further investigation and improving.

It is important to carry out such a research in Transcarpathian Hungarian Institute because not many have concentrated on the language learning strategies before so when learners use strategies and they do use them, they do it not consciously. Teachers have to point out the importance of strategies during learning foreign languages and to teach their students how to study more effectively.

The survey shows a picture of the strategy-using traditions of English major students Transcarpathian Hungarian Institute named after Ferenc Rakoczi II.

The paper is believed to give detailed analysis of students' attitudes to the process of learning and to their own knowledge and achievements in some detail. It can be of great use for those teachers who agree with the fact that the more strategies a student uses the more successful he might be in learning and acquiring a foreign language.

Appendix 1

It is important to converse with people who speak English.

You can learn the foreign language most successfully in the country where the target language is spoken.

I think in the foreign language.

I am ready to communicate even if I know that I make mistakes.

A foreign language cannot be studied without grammar rules.

It is important to take part in a formal course while learning a foreign language.

It is positive if my classmates and teacher correct my mistakes.

While reading a text, I try to concentrate on essential words, and do not look up each unknown word in the dictionary. I try to guess the meaning of the text with the help of familiar words.

During the learning process, I try to concentrate maximally on learning.

Swotting is not good in learning.

While learning new words, I try to find synonyms and antonyms to them.

During learning a new text, I used to draw pictures about the events.

I often listen to English programs on TV and radio.

While learning new words, I often use monolingual dictionaries.

I categorize new items of knowledge (e.g. words connected with health)

Before falling asleep, I often say the homework to myself.

My imagination helps me in learning.

I ask my classmates how they learn particular items.

I learn grammar inductively.

During learning new material, I often recall the material I have studied previously about the given topic.

While talking to English people, I try to note down the new words.

After learning the new material, I try to control whether I know the material in the proper way (I say it to myself or to my classmates).

Sometimes I prepare the homework together with my classmates, so we can learn a lot of things from one another.

If I do not understand a part from the text, I leave it out.
I read in English because doing so I can learn a great number of new words.

Appendix 2

(The statements which have got the most points, so the students totally agreed, or agreed with the statements)

1. It is important to converse with people who speak English. (15)
2. A language can be learnt more efficiently in the place where the given language is spoken. (13)
3. Swotting is not good in learning. (11)
4. It is positive if my classmate and teacher correct my mistakes. (11)
5. I am ready to communicate even if I know (10)
6. Sometimes I prepare the home-work together with my classmates, so we can learn a lot of things from one another. (9)
7. During learning new material, I often recall the material I have studied previously about the given topic. (9)
8. While reading a text, I try to concentrate on essential words, and do not look up each unknown word in the dictionary. I try to guess the meaning of the text with the help of familiar words. (8)
9. After learning the new material, I try to control whether I know the material in the proper way (I say it to myself or to my classmates). (7)
10. My imagination helps me in learning. (6)
11. A foreign language cannot be studied without grammar rules. (6)
12. I read in English because doing so I can learn a great number of new words. (6).
13. I often listen to English programs on TV and radio. (5)

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