

Language learning strategies profiles of EFL learners in Nepal

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Abstract

This study investigated language learning strategies (LLS) used by English as foreign language (EFL) learners in Nepal. For this study, 370 undergraduate level students from a university in Nepal responded to a questionnaire. The quantitative software SPSS was used to analyse the data. Results indicated that students were moderate users of those LLS. When considering strategies separately, metacognitive strategies were reported to be employed significantly more than any other category of strategies; followed by compensation and cognitive strategies. Affective strategies were the least preferred strategies by the participants. T-test results revealed significant differences between male and female learners in the use of overall strategies; male students reported using LLS more frequently than female students. Additionally, it was found that male students favoured compensation, social, and affective strategies more than their female peers, whereas female students preferred cognitive and metacognitive strategies more than their male peers. However, there was no significant difference between male and female students with regard to the use of memory strategies. Implications of these findings for EFL teaching and recommendations for further research are discussed.

Keywords: Language learning strategies, Nepal, university students

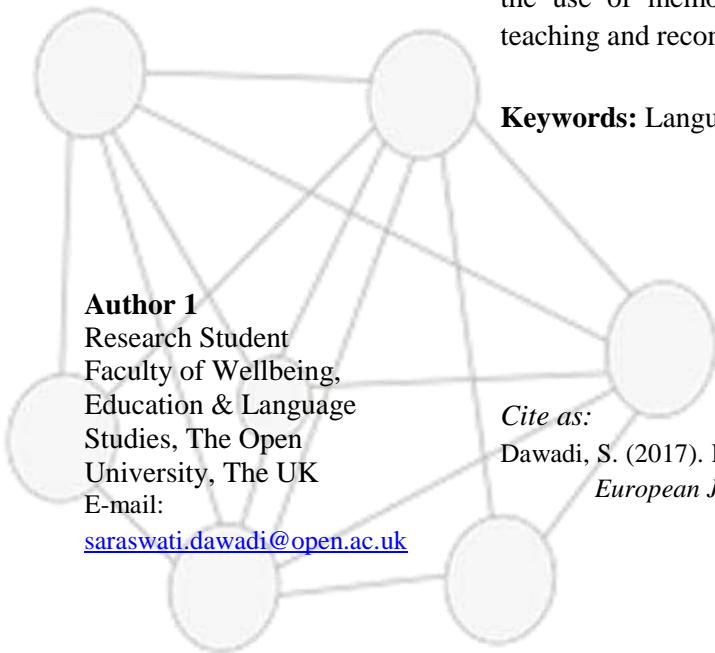
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INTRODUCTION

In order to facilitate second language (L2) learning, learners seem to employ different learning strategies. Language learning strategies (LLS) are deliberate and goal-oriented attempts made by L2 learners in order to learn the language efficiently. Oxford (1990) defines LLS as “specific actions taken by the learner to make learning easier, faster, more enjoyable, more self-directed, more effective, more transferable to new situations” (p.8). In other words, LLS are specific activities consciously chosen by L2 learners for regulating their own language learning process (Griffiths, 2008). The conscious choice factor seems to be important in defining the learning strategy concept as “the element of consciousness is what distinguishes strategies from those processes that are not strategic” (Cohen, 1998, p. 4).

Oxford's (1990) Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL) categorizes LLS into two groups as ‘direct strategies’ and ‘indirect strategies’. Direct strategies directly involve the new language; they all “require mental processing of the language” (p. 37). They are composed of memory strategies, cognitive strategies, and compensation strategies. *Memory strategies* are those strategies which create some sort of mental images of learning items in learner’s mind that support the learner to remember information. *Cognitive strategies* are related to processing information and structuring it, e. g sending and receiving messages, analysing and summarising messages, reasoning, and creating structure, while *compensation strategies* are used for compensating knowledge gaps, e.g. guessing the meaning of unknown words and gesturing when dealing with problems that occur in communication. Indirect strategies provide support to process information when learning a new language. They comprise metacognitive strategies, affective strategies and social strategies. *Metacognitive strategies* are those strategies that support L2 learners to manage their own learning such as planning, monitoring and evaluating their learning process. Altunay (2014) argues, metacognitive strategies help “learners to gain control over emotions and motivations related to language learning through self-monitoring”(p.23). *Affective strategies* refer to identifying one’s affective traits and knowing how to manage them. They are used to take one’s emotional temperature, promote self-encouragement and reduce anxiety, encourage one’s self. *Social strategies* are those strategies that engage learners in using the language such as taking help from others, and working with peers. This means, learning a language from and/or with others.

Literature review

Whether there is a gender difference in the use of LLS has been of interest to scholars and researchers for many years. However, the findings from previous studies are not conclusive. For instance, Green and Oxford's (1995) study on university level L2 learners of English showed that female learners employed more strategies than male learners; female learners used social, memory, affective and metacognitive strategies more frequently than their male peers did. Similarly, Lan and Oxford (2003) having collected data from school level English as a foreign language (EFL) learners in Taiwan, reported that girls used almost all the strategies significantly more often than boys. The overall results indicated that they



were moderate users of LLS; the most frequent strategies were compensation and affective strategies (both with the same mean), whereas the least used ones were the memory strategies. In addition, Zeynali's (2012) study indicated that female learners outperformed male learners in overall strategy use. Female learners reported using social/affective strategies more frequently than their male peers. Furthermore, Tezcan and Deneme's (2016) study on 8th graders EFL learners in Turkey and Salahshour, Sharifi, and Salahshour's (2013) study on high school EFL learners in Iran indicated that females used LLS more frequently than their male counterparts.

However, such kind of gender differences in strategy use might depend on cultural background or social context of L2 learners. There are some other studies around the globe, which report males using more strategies than females. For instance, Tran (1988), having collected data from Vietnamese refugees in the USA, reported that males were more likely to employ more LLS to learn English than their female peers. Wharton's (2000) study on bilingual university students in Singapore also revealed that male students employed LLS more frequently than female students. Similarly, Bacon (1992) and Liyanage (2004) found that males used translation (as a listening comprehension strategy when listening to authentic L2 texts) more frequently than their female friends did. Bacon also argued that males and females adjust their LLS differently to the difficulty of the L2 texts and males are usually more confident than females in using LLS, when they are exposed to authentic L2 texts. Similar results were reported by Nhan and Lai (2013) with regard to LLS use by university level EFL learners in Vietnam that males employed LLS more often than females. Furthermore, in Zarei's (2013) study on university level students in Iran, males reported using all the strategies, except social categories, more frequently than females did. Iranian students were moderate users of LLS; metacognitive strategies were the most favoured strategies while social strategies were the least favoured ones.

Nevertheless, there are some other studies which indicated no significant differences between male and female learners in terms of their LLS use. For instance, Nisbet, Tindall, and Arroyo's (2005) study on university level Chinese EFL learners indicated no significant difference between male and female learners in their LLS use. Very similar to Irian students, they made medium use of LLS and employed metacognitive strategies most frequently. Very much similar results were reported by Radwan (2011) about LLS use by Oman university level ESL learners, and Ismail and Khatib (2013) about LLS use by university level ESL students from the United Arab Emirates, that there was no significant difference between males and females in terms of LLS use. Subramaniam (2014) also found no significant difference between male and female Malaysian secondary school students in terms of their LLS use. The overall use of the strategies indicated that the most frequently used strategies were compensation strategies and the least frequently used ones were affective strategies. Similarly, Tahriri and Divsar (2011) and Nahavandi and Mukundan's (2014) study on Iranian EFL learners indicated no significant differences between male and female learners' LLS use. They were moderate users of the overall LLS. Both studies indicated that metacognitive strategies were the most frequently used strategies, whereas affective strategies were the least used ones. Furthermore, Alhaysony (2017) found no significant difference

between male and female Saudi EFL learners in terms of their LLS use. Very much similar to Irian students, they least preferred affective strategies for their L2 development.

There were also some reports that males and females have different preferences of LLS. For instance, Hong-Nam and Leavell's (2006) study reported that males favoured the use of metacognitive strategies most and affective strategies the least, while females preferred social strategies most and memory strategies the least. However, Radwan (2011) reported that Oman male students tended to use more social strategies than females did. Liyanage and Bartlett (2011), having studied on LLS use by high school ESL students in Sri Lanka, also reported that male and female students had different preferences in terms of LLS use. Similarly, Nhan and Lai (2013) found that female learners in Vietnam preferred affective and memory strategies, while male learners favoured compensation and social strategies. Furthermore, Zhao and Intaraprasert (2013) having studied LLS use by Chinese EFL learners, reported that female students tended to use the strategies such as using facial expression and noticing the interlocutor's gestures, while male students favoured the strategy 'making up a new words to communicate a desired concept' and feeling alright to take risk. This finding further indicates that male learners were more likely to be confident and risk-takers in using LLS than their female counterparts.

To recapitulate, there is an extensive body of research investigating the association between LLS use and gender. However, the results are not yet conclusive. Additionally, almost no research has explored LLS use by Nepalese EFL learners. Therefore, this study was conducted to fill the gaps in research and produce some evidence that is expected to lend further support to the connection between LLS use and gender.

Research questions

The study had the following four questions.

1. What type of learning strategies are used by Nepalese EFL learners?
2. Which LLS categories are used most frequently by the learners?
3. Is there any relationship between the LLS chosen by Nepalese EFL learners and their gender?

METHODOLOGY

Participants

A total of 370 undergraduate students (Male=183, female=187), with the age range of 20-25, from Tribhuvan University, Nepal, participated in the present study. All participants had received at least 13 years of English instruction by the time of the data collection. All of them were Nepali native speakers. They filled out questionnaire at their university premises. Nineteen of the questionnaire were incomplete, so they were removed from the survey. Thus, only 351 questionnaires were used for statistical analysis.

Instruments

The major tool of data collection used in the study was LLS use questionnaire. The questionnaire consists of two sections. The first section includes some questions aimed at collecting background information about the participants such as gender, mother tongue, age and number of years they were studying English. The second part comprises 50 LLS designed on a 5-point Likert scale: 1 (never), 2 (rarely), 3 (sometimes), 4 (often), and 5 (always).

The LLS included in the questionnaire were adapted from Oxford's (1990) SILL as it is a widely-used tool for assessing L2 learners' strategy use (Fahim & Noormohammadi, 2014). However, Oxford's SILL was slightly modified for the strategy survey in the study realising the need to accommodate the LLS with the culture and learning traditions of Nepalese students. The questionnaire initially constructed in English was translated into Nepali, the native language of the participants and it was ensured that there was no distortion caused by the translation. Then, the Nepali-version questionnaire was piloted with 20 students and a few minor changes in the questionnaire were made before collecting data for the main study.

Data collection and preparation

All the participants were informed about the nature and purpose of the study and the type of data required. Students were also ensured about the anonymity of their responses before they consented for the study. Then, they were given detailed instructions on how to fill out the questionnaire. Responses to the questionnaire were entered into the IBM SPSS Statistics Version 20 software for further analysis.

Data analysis

There were several steps of data analysis. At first, descriptive statistics (means, standard deviation (SD), kurtosis and skewness) was examined at item level to investigate to ensure that all values of kurtosis and skewness fell within the accepted range (± 2) for a normal distribution (Zhang & Zhang, 2013). Then, LLS use at category level was analysed by examining the descriptive statistics (means, and SD). Following Zhang and Wu (2009), three levels of usages were employed to examine LSS use by participants: low (mean of 2.4 or lower), moderate (mean of 2.5 to 3.4), and high (mean of 3.5 or higher). Finally, t-tests were run to examine gender differences in strategy use.

Results

With regard to the first two research questions ('What type of learning strategies are used by Nepalese EFL learners?' and 'Which LLS categories are used most frequently by the learners?') the results demonstrated an overall medium range of strategy use by participants ($M=3.37$, $SD=.30$) and the data at category level indicated high usage of two categories

(metacognitive and compensation) and medium usage of the other four categories (cognitive, social, memory and affective). Overall, metacognitive strategies were the most frequently used categories, followed by compensation strategies and cognitive strategies. Affective strategies were the least preferred ones. Table 1 presents descriptive statistics for all the six categories.

Table 1: Descriptive statistics for strategies on scale level

Strategies	No of items	Mean	SD	Ranking
Metacognitive	10	3.73	.72	1
Compensation	6	3.64	.84	2
Cognitive	13	3.46	.55	3
Social	7	3.32	.79	4
Memory	8	3.16	.78	5
Affective	6	2.62	.85	6

Closer inspection of the data at item level reveals an interesting picture: half of the strategies went to high-usage level and other half to medium usage level. Among the five most frequent strategies, two of them were cognitive strategies, one was compensation strategy and the rest were metacognitive strategies, whereas all the five least frequent strategies were affective strategies, except one memory strategy.

With regard to the third research question (i.e. ‘Is there any relationship between the LLS chosen by Nepalese EFL learners and their gender?’), the t-tests results revealed statistically significant differences ($t(349) = 5.14, p = .001$, two-tailed) between male and female learners in the use of the overall strategies; male students reported using more strategies than their female peers. A closer look into the data at category level suggested that males favoured compensation, social and affective strategies more than their female peers, whereas females used cognitive and metacognitive strategies more frequently than their male counterparts. However, there was no significant difference between the two groups with regard to the use of memory strategies. Table 2 presents descriptive statistics for all the strategy categories.

Table 2: Gender variation in LLS use

Strategy category	Male (N=173)		Female (N=178)		P-value
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	
Metacognitive	3.63	.79	3.83	.63	.008
Compensation	4.23	.52	3.06	.67	.001
Cognitive	3.97	.55	3.53	.54	.009
Social	3.56	.73	3.09	.78	.001
Memory	3.17	.79	3.16	.78	.895
Affective	2.77	.81	2.48	.86	.001

Further digging into the data indicates that male students favoured the use of compensation and metacognitive strategies most and affective strategies the least, whereas females reported using metacognitive and cognitive strategies most and affective strategies the least. Thus, the least favoured strategies by both males and females were affective strategies.

DISCUSSION

Patterns of LLS use by EFL learners in Nepal

The study investigated LLS use by undergraduate level EFL students in Nepal. The results indicated that participants were medium strategy users with regard to the overall strategy use. When examining strategies separately, they were high users of metacognitive and compensation strategies and medium users of other strategies. Metacognitive and compensation strategies were the most favoured strategies, while affective strategies were the least favoured ones.

The finding that participants made moderate use of the overall strategies suggests that participants were not sophisticated strategy users. In other words, they did not use strategies consistently to learn English. But, it is usually argued that consistent use of strategy is necessary to become successful language learners (Oxford, 1990). There are two tentative explanations for the moderate use of strategies by participants in this study. First, as argued by Alhaysony (2017), they did not have to use English for daily communication/ survival as they were learning English in an EFL setting; so, they did not have a sense of urgency to learn English as effectively as they could, which might have directly or indirectly affected the rate of their strategy use. Second, it might also be a case that participants did not need much strategies as they were university level learners with minimum 13-year long experience of learning English.

Consistent with the findings of some previous studies (e.g. Altunay, 2014; Ismail & Khatib, 2013; Nahavandi & Mukundan, 2014; Radwan, 2011; Salahshour et al., 2013), participants reported using metacognitive strategies most frequently. High usage of these strategies indicates that participants were able to monitor and control their learning process. Richard, Platt, and Platt (2002) argue that the employment of metacognitive strategies is mainly controlled by L2 learners' metacognitive knowledge, which is mostly influenced by L2 learners' age, proficiency, and duration of study. Thus, it might be plausible to argue that high usage of metacognitive strategies by participants was associated with their age and EFL proficiency as they were adult learners studying in a university. The most frequent of those strategies were 'learning from their own mistakes' and 'looking for opportunities to read in English', whereas the least frequent ones were 'having clear goals for improving English skills' and 'thinking about their own progress in learning English'.

The second most favoured strategies by participants in this study were compensation strategies. This finding suggests that participants relied a lot on compensation strategies to face with the challenges they encountered when learning and producing English (Chang, 2011). The result corroborated with the findings of some previous studies (e.g. Alhaysony,

2017; Altunay, 2014; Chang, 2011; Tezcan & Deneme, 2016), which reported high usage of compensation strategies by L2 learners. Among the strategies, the most favoured strategy was 'guessing the meaning of unfamiliar words', whereas the least favoured strategy was 'making up new words when they do not know the right ones in English'.

Cognitive strategies, which ranked third, support L2 learners to learn new language through practicing, reasoning, summarizing, and analyzing (Oxford, 1990). Therefore, these strategies are considered to be very important for learning a new language effectively. The results of this study indicated that the most frequently used cognitive strategies were 'reading for pleasure in English' and 'writing messages, notes or reports in English', whereas the least frequently used strategy was 'see movies spoken in English or watch TV shows run in English'. The least used strategy seems to be associated with the lack of opportunity for participants to use it. This means, it is not easy to find TV shows or movies spoken in English in Nepalese context.

The fourth most frequent strategies were social strategies. To some extent, participants seemed to be proactive in developing their English language skills. One of the possible reasons behind their active participation in learning English might be: the existing English curriculum of Tribhuvan University is underpinned by a student-oriented philosophy. Additionally, very similar to Saudi Arabian context (Alhosamy, 2017), the recent changes in pedagogical practices in Nepalese education promotes interactive learning, that is likely to develop linguistic fluency. The most frequently used social strategy was 'taking help from other people', while the least preferred one was 'asking other people to correct them when they talk in English.'

Memory strategies ranked fifth in this study. This finding was congruent with the finding of some former studies (e.g. Alhosamy, 2017; Altunay, 2014; Chang, 2011; Hong-Nam and Leavell, 2006; Salahshouret.al.,2013) which reported low use of memory strategies. Low use of memory strategies by participants in this study might be associated with learners' proficiency level. For instance, the least used memory strategies were 'acting out new vocabulary' and 'using rhymes and flashcards'. These strategies are less likely to be popular with adult learners (Hong-Nam and Leavell, 2006). However, participants were found frequently reviewing English lessons.

Affective strategies were the least favoured strategies by the participants in this study. This finding was consistent with the findings of some previous studies (Altunay, 2014; Alhaysony, 2017; Chang, 2011; Hong-Nam & Leavell, 2006; Nikoopour, et al. 2012; Oxford, 1990; Wharton, 2000), which also reported low use of these strategies. One of the possible reasons for the least use of affective strategies by the participants in this study might be associated with participants' proficiency level in English. Bremner (1998) argues that affective strategies are not the strategies for learning a language; they are simply features that exist among low proficiency learners to make them feel more confident in using the new language. Thus, it can be argued that an increase in learners' proficiency decreases the frequency of affective strategy use. As the participants in the study were university level learners, it can be assumed that they did not have to use these strategies much. Another possible factor might be associated with their cultural upbringing. Hong-Nam and Leavell (2006) argue, 'Asian cultural mores encourage listening to others and discourage public

discussion of feelings' (p.409). As all the participants in this study were from Nepal, a south-Asian country, it can be assumed that their upbringing may have affected their LLS choices.

LLS use and students' gender

With regard to the relationship between LLS and students' gender, the results of this study contradict with the findings of some previous studies (Green & Oxford; 1995; Lan & Oxford, 2003; Tezcan & Deneme, 2016; Zeynali, 2012; Salahshour, et al., 2013), which reported female superiority in LLS use; and also with some other studies (e.g Alhaysony, 2017; Nahavandi & Mukundan, 2014; Nisbet et al., 2005; Radwan, 2011; Subramaniam, 2014; Tahriri & Divsar, 2011) which reported no significant relation between LLS use and gender. However, the results of the study were congruent with the findings of some former studies (e.g Bacon, 1992; Hong-Nam and Leavell, 2006; Liyanage, 2004; Nhan & Lai, 2013; Tran, 1988; Wharton, 2000; Zarei, 2013) that males used LLS more frequently than females. The study also revealed that males employed compensation, social and affective strategies more frequently than their female peers, whereas females used cognitive and metacognitive strategies more frequently than their male peers. Thus, the study provides evidence to Ellis's (1994) claim that learners' gender is one of the factors that affects learners' choice of strategies to learn their foreign language.

A few tentative explanations could be made to interpret gender variations found in this study regarding undergraduate EFL learners' LLS use in Nepalese context. One of the possible factors associated with higher use of overall strategies by male students could be males' social position in Nepal. Rao (2008) discusses about male-dominated social structure in China. In Chinese culture, right from childhood stage, a man is nurtured to be successful at any cost; "no matter how difficult it would be, a man should never be discouraged and try his best to reach his goal" (Rao, p. 261). Nepalese societies have very much similar practices that encourage a man, but not a woman, to be successful. Thus, it can be assumed that male students, but not necessarily female students, used various strategies frequently to be a successful language learner.

The finding that males used social strategies more frequently than their female peers was not consistent with some former studies (Green & Oxford, 1995; Hong-Nam and Leavell, 2006), which reported that these strategies were used by females more frequently than their male peers. Politzer (1983, cited in Zeynali, 2012, p.1618) argues that females use more social strategies as they have 'stronger social orientation'. However, higher use of social strategies by male students in this study seems to originate from biological, cultural and socialization related causes, as discussed by Green and Oxford (1995). The conservative nature of Nepalese culture seems to prevent females from socializing and establishing relationships outside their immediate circles. As a result, female students may have been inhibited by their shyness and fear of speaking to other people. Thus, it can be assumed that females may hesitate to use social strategies such as 'practising English with other people', and 'asking for help'. It could also be a case that, "female students may have lower self-esteem in reporting the strategies they used for learning English" (Tercanlıoğlu, 2004, p.190) in this male dominated Nepalese society.

The finding regarding the higher usage of affective strategies by male students indicates that males could better manage their own emotions, and they had greater confidence and willingness to manage fear and anxiety related to English speaking than their female counterparts. In addition, male students seemed to have much more self-reliant in keeping their conversation going, and have greater enjoyment of speaking English than female students (Maubach & Morgan, 2001). The results also provide further evidence to Zhou and Intaraprasert's (2014) claim that males would take more risk than their female counterparts. However, the results indicated that females' superiority resides in their comprehensive set of metacognitive and cognitive strategies. This finding was partly congruent with the finding of Liyanage and Bartlett (2011) and Salahshour, et al. (2013), who reported that females use cognitive strategies more frequently than their male counterparts. This finding might suggest that females have higher degree of awareness of their needs than their male peers. In addition, it can also be a case that "female learners look for more opportunity to engage in the analysis and practice of second language input" (Salahshour, et al., 2013, p. 641).

Limitations and recommendations for further research

The present study has produced some interesting findings with regard to LLS use by EFL learners. However, the study has some limitations. The main limitation of the study concerns the sample size, though it may not compromise the validity of the findings. The students share important common attributes with other students from the same level of education, such as they all were Nepali native speakers, their ages did not vary much, and they were studying the same English curriculum in an EFL setting. Another limitation considers the appropriateness of LLS use questionnaire used in the study as it may have failed to capture the full array of LLS used by EFL learners.

In order to validate the findings of this study, further research with a larger sample of EFL learners with similar learning environment is recommended. In addition the role of some other factors such as age, motivation level, culture and nationality also need to be examined to generalise the findings of the study (Liyanage & Bartlett, 2011). Furthermore, this study examined participants' LLS preferences thorough a self-reported questionnaire only. Therefore, it is recommended that future research incorporates a variety of measures (e.g., diary recordings, in-depth interviews, think-aloud protocols, observations etc.) and evaluate the relationship between LLS use and gender over time. Such studies would ideally explore how learners apply strategies in carrying out specific language-related tasks and would reflect more clearly on gender variation in strategy use.

Implications of the study

This study has some implications for L2 pedagogy. The results of the study indicated that Nepalese EFL learners were moderate users of learning strategies. However, it should be noted that a good number of previous empirical studies on LLS use have indicated that higher use of strategies is associated with higher L2 proficiency (e.g. Griffiths, 2008; Lan & Oxford, 2003; Oxford, 2008; Park, 1997; Qingquan, Chatupote, & Teo, 2008). Therefore, it seems



important to encourage and support Nepalese EFL learners to be high users of LLS strategies so that they can enhance their proficiency. It is hoped that this research may raise awareness among EFL learners of the importance of using LLS.

Additionally, this study demonstrated gender variation in terms of LLS use; male and female students had clear preferences over LLS. Thus, the most important implication of this study is the need to understand individual learner's preferences and provide him/her with opportunities to use LLS according to his/her choices. Therefore, it seems important for EFL teachers to understand learners' individual differences in terms of LLS use so that they can provide individual treatment to their students. It seems highly important that teachers introduce LLS in their classroom instruction so that students get ample opportunity to try using those strategies. However, teachers should not forget that strategy instruction helps learners only if such instruction is relevant to learners' needs and characteristics (Oxford 1990). It is a must for L2 teachers today to identify individual differences in terms of their learning choices and help them accordingly. It is also recommended that teachers add LLS instruction into their curriculum and provide students with opportunities to try using LLS when involved with different tasks.

One of the potentially alarming issues concerns the least use of affective strategies by both male and female participants. As stated by Krashen (1982) L2 learners need a low affective filter to process the input, and effective learning usually takes place in a relaxed environment. Therefore, it seems important that EFL teachers in Nepal make their students aware of affective strategies and encourage students to use those strategies, when they have anxiety of learning English.

CONCLUSION

The study aimed at investigating LLS use by EFL learners in Nepal and make a comparison between male and female learners in terms of their learning strategy preferences. The results of this study were consistent with the general findings of previous studies (e.g Altunay, 2014; Hong-Nam and Leavell, 2006; Liyanage, 2004; Nahavandi and Mukundan, 2014; Nhan & Lai, 2013) that L2 learners use various strategies. However, it was found that participants in this study were just moderate users of EFL learning strategies. Therefore, it seems very important to make them aware of the importance of LLS and also provide them with opportunities to be familiar with various kinds of LLS so that they are encouraged to use more strategies. This study provides new evidence for strategy use in the Nepalese context. The findings demonstrated unequivocally that EFL learners in Nepal were aware of various LLS. They used LLS with a medium to high frequency, with metacognitive strategies ranking highest among all strategies, and affective strategies ranking the lowest.

With regard to the relationship between LLS use and gender, it was found that gender significantly influenced reported strategy preferences of participants; males were found using significantly more learning strategies than their female counterparts. Therefore, the group in most urgent need of strategy instruction would be the female students, which seemed unable to use some effective strategies, such as compensation and social strategies, as effectively as their male counterparts did. It was also found that male and female participants had different

preferences for LLS use. Therefore, it is highly crucial that teachers understand individual variations in strategy use and employ learner-centered pedagogy.

When reviewing literature for the study, very sadly, I could not notice even a single study investigating LLS use by EFL learners in Nepal, though call for research was made over two decades ago. While rest of the world has already produced innumerable studies and made a call for strategy-specific research, the Nepalese EFL research community remains in its infancy stage, as in Saudi Arabian context (McMullen, 2009). Therefore, empirical studies should be carried out to explore Nepalese EFL learners' LLS use without any delay. EFL teachers in Nepal need to investigate what is going on inside the Nepalese classrooms and use strategic instruction to enhance English proficiency of their students. More than anything, I hope that this study will serve as a wakeup call to the EFL teachers in Nepal.

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