Different Strategy Language Learning Primary Level

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Abstract

The learning strategies involved in the acquisition of a second language have been a topic of high interest in recent years, without at the moment there being consensus on its categorization, the nature of its operation or on its empowerment in the applied context. The purpose of the study was to investigate the different language learning strategies (EFL), used at the primary level. For this study, the students of the primary level, from the Maria de Hosto School, with a total of 35 students, participated (between 10 and 12 years old). The instrument for data collection was the Strategic Inventory for Language Learning (SILL). For this, a conceptual analysis is carried out on the notion of learning strategy, its typologies and its possibilities of classification, in addition to its implications in light of what current psycho-pedagogical knowledge allows to offer. The results showed that there were statistically significant relationships between different strategies implemented. In addition, the results of this study showed that, among the different learning, social and emotional strategies. Therefore, the preferences of the student group should be considered, by using language learning strategies and adjusting their teaching so as to meet the needs of students when learning a second or foreign language. *Keywords:* language learning strategies, primary level.

Introduction

The English language is today the language of today's world; It follows from this the importance of the training in the language of our students. In the Dominican Republic, English is taught within schools from the primary level onwards, from the 2nd. However, it is worrying that at the end of the primary level, students have very elementary knowledge about the language, and sometimes these are insufficient when entering the secondary level. The opinions about the possible causes of this situation are diverse, but almost all agree on the importance of the implementation of the strategies to be used by the students to make the teaching-learning process more effective. There are numerous research papers, which determine the fundamentals regarding the use of the different learning strategies of a language, making it clear that this point is the absolute responsibility of the teacher. It seems then that it is the teacher who has the task of making use of the different strategies to be implemented daily in order to favor the development of each class. But what happens

when reality is far from expected. There is much talk about the different strategies that students should use without taking into account or leaving aside that should also be motivated; the teacher. He is in charge of planning fun and relevant classes for each topic, adapted to the needs of his students, in addition to creating a pleasant enough atmosphere for the conference to develop favorably. For all the above, we dare to say that it is mandatory that the teacher is motivated in order to motivate their students to use innovative strategies in class. This is the subject of our research, it is intended to give a positive response to a real problem, which exists in the Eugenio Maria de Hosto School, belonging to the Educational District 1002, during the first period of the year 2019, The idea is that students express their needs and identify their possible limitations and / or failures.

Statement of the Problem

In the Dominican Republic, English is taught within the schools from the Primary Level onwards, however, it is worrying that at the end of the primary level, students have very elementary knowledge about the language, and sometimes these are insufficient when entering the level secondary. The English language is taught as a subject of compulsory study in the public and private educational institutions of our country for five years. According to the curriculum, it is taught from the first year of the basic cycle to the fifth year of high school, for three or four hours of class per week. English is taught as a foreign language (EFL1). The distinction between EFL and ESL2 is based on the communicative context that the student has once outside the English classroom (Brown, 2001). There is little information and knowledge about how English is taught in public and private schools. It is unknown how effective teaching methods and strategies are, how much and how well students learn English and about the ownership and effectiveness of evaluation processes. This is so because what happens in the English classroom lacks study. The fact is that there is no research, analysis, systematization of experiences, or debate on this subject.

Nature of the Problem

Teaching a new language requires, among other factors, strategies and resources that favor the language learning teaching process and present it as a useful and necessary tool for life. The English program, as a curriculum guide that guides the English language learning processes, has remained in use and has not been revised since it was implemented.

And after all this we ask ourselves: Do students from public and private schools learn English? The answer to this question seems obvious since, given certain circumstances, it is felt that public and private school students definitely do not learn English or learn very little.

The high rates of deferred students in English, as a subject within the school curriculum, turn out to be alarming, more so, if we consider that the numbers seem to increase in each school period. This performance demonstrates the little or low interest of both students in learning the language, as well as teachers in the area in teaching it. The reasons could be many and of different nature, however, we will focus attention on the aspect of what strategy the student uses to learn a language. There are at least five factors that are determining factors in the teaching process of learning the English language: the teacher, the student, the methodology, the curriculum and the educational context. From there, it is possible to explain or at least justify the failure to reach the levels of communicative competence in English of students who finish the last year of the primary level. There are different opinions about the possible causes of this situation, but almost all agree on the importance of implementing the strategies to be used by students to make the language learning process more effective. Positioning ourselves from this point of view, the problem arises: What different learning strategies of a language do the students of the Eugenio Maria de Hosto school use, at the Initial Level?

Objective

General Objective

To investigate the Different Language Learning Strategies (EFL), used at the Primary Level, at the Maria de Hosto School, during the first period of 2019.

Specific Objectives
1. To define the term learning strategy from its conceptual definition.
2. To analyze the study of typologies and possible classifications of learning strategy.
3. To identify which are the secondary, indirect or support strategies.

For respond to the research objectives, we ask the following questions:

Research Questions

1. What different learning strategies of a language do the students of the Eugenio Maria de Hosto school use, at the Initial Level?
2. How are different types of strategies classified?
3. What are the secondary, indirect or support strategies?

Geographical Context and Historical Backgrounds

Generalities of the Educational Center.

The Eugenio María de Hostos school is located in District 02 of Regional 10 in the Cruz Grande de Sabana Perdida sector in Santo Domingo Norte, Ave. The Restauradores # 147. Tel. (809) 568-4489. It is limited to the North with the Ave. "The Restauradores and the Las Pulgas market", to the South by the Play "Los Amiguitos", to the East the "Los Pinos" sector, to the West is the "Colmado Francisco". Within the demarcation of Cruz Grande, most of the inhabitants of this context lack the main basic services (lack of jobs, generated by the lack of business in the area, lack of water, little electricity, there is no recreation area, garbage collection is inefficient, lack of library, there is no cultural club, the residents of this sector do not receive medical assistance because a large part of the population does not have medical insurance, among others).

History of the Center

It was founded on May 5, 1994. The history of this center is totally related and very specifically to social and community work because it was founded by leaders of neighborhood boards (which is registered in the center project) passed to the public sector in 2000/2001 with the name Sunflower and given the step to the public sector we received the name of Cruz Grande Girasol since the minister related the name of the school to the sector of Cruz Grande which is our headquarters. Then, by disposition of the Ministry of Education in 2010, he requested the change of name with the name of an educator of said community, since he did not have any deceiver of the deceased community, he takes the name of Eugenio María de Hostos due to the contribution of this character in favor of our

Dominican education, now our school is called "Eugenio María de Hostos School". (Operational Manual of the educational center, Eugenio Maria de Hosto, 2018-2019)

*Philosophy*: Our philosophy is based on the general purposes of Dominican education. Two basic purposes or approaches are highlighted: moral and academic. In moral terms, we seek to train students who recognize themselves as a person, made in the image of God, who practice moral values and have a good relationship with all and all human beings.  As for academics, we aspire to train creative, diligent and competent students capable of facing the challenges that life presents daily.  Both moral and academic approaches are called to complement and be transmitted through all the areas of knowledge that we share in the classrooms, so that we can realize the profile of a new man and woman. The institution's motto is: "We educate with love for a better society" clearly reveals our philosophy.

*Mission:* Raise a quality education to our student population, applying the transformations of the curriculum design to train competent students capable of facing the challenges that arise in life.

*View*: To be a model school in the integral formation of children by means of an innovative education with a pedagogy based on competences to provide quality education in accordance with the educational policy approaches.

Values:  Our educational center intends to train based on the following values: Love, Commitment, Responsibility, Ethics, Integrity, Solidarity, Equality, Justice, Respect, Dignity (Operational Manual of the educational center, Eugenio Maria de Hosto, 2018-2019)

Antecedents

In the search of antecedents that have a close relation with the objective of study, a field research work has been carried out in the different universities of the country, and others at an international level, yielding the following data:

Several studies have investigated language learning strategies used by English as a foreign language (EFL) students (Abdolmehdi and Mohammad, 2005; Chang et al., 2008;

Huang, 1997; Lai, 2009; Lan and Oxford, 2003; Li and Qin, 2006; Yang, 1992). However, few studies specifically dedicated to the primary level factor in the use of language learning strategies Therefore, there is a need for further exploration of the relationship between the primary level and the use of the learning strategy in an environment of English as a foreign language (EFL). Research conducted specifically in the use of learning strategies in foreign languages at the national level, relate their use to training in autonomy: for Noguerol, "the student develops the ability to pilot their own learning [...] learn to learn" (2003: 40).

Along these same lines, López and Arciniegas (2003) verified the effectiveness of a program of methodological strategies in the development of metacognitive reading comprehension strategies in the students participating in the study, in concrete behaviors such as control, evaluation and self-regulation. From the processes of reading comprehension and learning.

Tejada (2001) took the metaphor as a strategy that contributes to reading comprehension; initially with the teachers and through them, it can be inferred that in this same sense the students will benefit. On the other hand, Berdugo insists that the apprentice advances in the process of building his autonomy through tasks that actively involve him, giving him progressive control of the metacognitive processes of planning, execution and evaluation (2001: 97).

Review of the Literature

Learning Strategies: Conceptual Delimitation

From the advance and the previous approach to the concept of learning strategies it could be thought that the work of defining this concept is easy, that it is finished or that there is consensus among researchers and professionals about its delimitation. Nothing

farther from reality, the definitions we can find are multiple, varying widely the theoretical and structural approximation of its elaboration. In fact, there are not only differences between the conceptualizations of this term, but even others, such as learning behaviors, tactics, resources, skills or others, have sometimes been understood as synonyms for learning strategies (Griffiths, 2008).

Language Learning Strategies

Since the 1970s, researchers made efforts to investigate successful language learners' learning strategies and classify learning patterns from those successful learners. There are various classifications of language learning strategies. Each type of classification has its own characteristics and provides researchers with insights into the grouping of language learning strategies.

Classifications and Typologies

Naiman et al. (1978) interviewed good language learners and proposed five primary strategy categories, and a number of secondary strategy categories.

The primary strategies refer to those strategies which were commonly used by all good language learners interviewed, and the secondary strategies refer to those strategies which were used only by some of the good learners. In his paper, Chen (2014) refers to primary strategy includes: (a) an active task approach, (b) realization of language as a system, (c) realization of language as a means of communication and interaction, (d) management of affective demands, and (e) monitoring of second language performance. An active task approach includes responding positive to learning opportunity or seeking and exploiting learning environment, adding related language learning activities to regular classroom program, and practicing." (p.145).

Realization of language as a system encompasses analyzing individual problems, making first language and second language comparisons, analyzing target language to make inferences, and making use of fact that language is a system. Realization of language as a means of communication and interaction is composed of emphasizing fluency over accuracy, and seeking communicative situations with L2 speakers. Management of affective demands consists of finding socio-cultural meanings, and coping with affective demands in learning. Monitoring L2 performance refers to constantly revising L2 system by testing inferences and asking L2 native speakers for feedback. (Chen, 2014, p.145).

Four main learning strategies are monitoring, inferencing, formal practicing, and function practicing Bialystock (1978). To Rubin (1981), two categories for learning

strategies are direct and indirect strategies. Learning is affected by direct strategies like "clarification/verification, monitoring, memorization, guessing/ inductive reasoning, deductive reasoning, and practice" (Chen, 2014, p.145). Unlike direct learning strategies, indirect learning strategies cannot help learning directly. They can contribute indirectly through "creating practicing opportunities and using production tricks" (Chen, 2014, p.145).

Learners use other types of strategies like social-affective, cognitive, and metacognitive strategies (Brown & Palinscar, 1982). Learning materials which are manipulated and transformed directly in some specific learning tasks are conducted by cognitive learning strategies. These materials are materials like, translation, deduction, recombination, contextualization, and elaboration (O'Malley & Chamot, 1985). However, learning process is under the control of metacognitive strategies which include self-management, monitoring, reasoning, selective attention, planning, direct attention, self-evaluation, and planning. Social- affective strategies are strategies which are used by learners for social interaction with others like cooperation with others, and some questions for clarification (Chen, 2014).

Rubin (1981) classified the learning strategies into two categories: direct strategies and indirect strategies. Direct strategies refer to strategies that directly affected learning, including clarification/verification, monitoring, memorization, guessing/ inductive reasoning, deductive reasoning, and practice. Indirect strategies refer to strategies that contributed indirectly to learning, including creating practicing opportunities and using production tricks.

There are three categories of strategies used by learners: cognitive, metacognitive and affective-social strategies (Brown & Palinscar, 1982; O'Malley & Chamot, 1985). Cognitive strategies refer to manipulating or transforming the learning materials directly in specific learning tasks, such as repetition, translation, grouping, note-taking, deduction, recombination, imagery, auditory representation, keyword, contextualization, elaboration, transfer, and inferencing (O'Malley & Chamot, 1985). Metacognitive strategies refer to an overall control over the learning process, such as advanced organizers, direct attention, selective attention, self-management, planning, reasoning, monitoring, and self-evaluation.

Affective-social strategies mean the way in which learners cope with their affective demands and social interaction with others, such as cooperation with peers and questions for clarification. Oxford (1990) combined many of these learning strategies into a system. The system is popular and widely used to analyze language learning. This system includes direct and indirect strategies. These two strategies compensated and supported each other and helped learners to learn a second language (Oxford, 1990). While, memory and cognitive are sub-divisions of direct strategies, metacognitive, social, and affective strategies are sub-divisions of indirect strategies.

According to Chen (2014) mental processing of the language is related to direct strategies, and learners are able to enter the information into memory and retrieve new information with the help of memory strategies. Scanning, analyzing, and summarizing are language reception and production of meaning which are manipulated by cognitive strategies. Learners should overcome the shortage in their existing knowledge by the use of compensation strategies. Language learning can be supported by indirect strategies. However, these types of strategies are not directly involved in using language. Learners have capabilities to organize and evaluate learning by the help of metacognitive strategies. The tasks which can be done by metacognitive strategies are concentration on leaning and planning, organizing and evaluating of learning. Affective strategies are types of strategies which can assist learners manage emotions and attitudes such as anxiety reduction, and self-encouragement. Communication with high proficiency level learners or native speakers and the increasing necessary knowledge for using target language are possible by social strategies (Chen, 2014). In the current study, the researcher will try to employ the classification of language learning strategies by Oxford (1990).

Primary strategies

a) Cognitive strategies involve the interaction between the subject's cognitive system and the information it faces (Hernández and Izquierdo, 2016; Jiménez and Puente, 2014). This interaction involves precisely the processing of said information. Direct strategies required mental processing of the language and involved the language directly. Memory strategies are ways to help learners enter information into memory and retrieve new information, such as grouping, imagery, and structured review. Cognitive strategies are

ways to manipulate the language reception and production of meaning, such as scanning, analyzing, and summarizing. Compensation strategies are ways to help learners overcoming limitations in existing knowledge, such as guessing wisely in reading and listening, and using gestures in speaking and synonym in writing.

Secondary, indirect or support strategies

These are tactics that facilitate optimal conditions for the primary strategies to achieve the best possible result (Oxford, 2001). A fairly comprehensive system of this second general set could differentiate between strategies: a) personal or individual and b) environmental and temporary adjustment. Next, both sets will be analyzed in greater detail.

Indirect strategies supported language learning, but they did not involve using the language directly. Metacognitive strategies are ways to help learners organize and evaluate learning, such as concentration on learning, planning and organizing for learning tasks, and evaluation of learning. Affective strategies are ways to help learners manage emotions and attitudes, such as self-encouragement, anxiety reduction, and discussing feelings with others. Social strategies are for learning with others, such as clarification, communication with native speakers or higher proficiency learners, and increasing knowledge of the target language culture. This study will employ Oxford's (1990) language learning strategy classification system.

Methodology Design

Type of investigation:

For our research we will use descriptive research, in which we will describe the reality of the situations we intend to analyze. However, our research consists not only in accumulating and processing data, but also in examining the characteristics of the topic to be investigated, defining it and asking questions, proceeding to select the technique for data collection and the sources to be consulted.

Research Design:

The present investigation has a non-experimental design of a descriptive type of field, because the causes and consequences in which the phenomenon appears in the same way that bibliographic reviews were made to establish the fundamental characteristics and factors of the subject of study are taken into account. In this type of design according to the same author, the researcher must limit himself to observing existing situations, given the inability to influence the variables and their effects.

Research Method

Since the objective of this study was to investigate the different strategies used by students to learn a language for the primary level, the mixed methods approach was used. According to Cresswell (2015), mixed methods combine quantitative data with qualitative data to obtain a strength that provides a better understanding of the research problem.

Population and Sample

*The population*: it is made up of the students of third, fourth, fifth and sixth grade of primary school in the English subject of the Eugenio Maria de Hosto School, belonging to the Educational District 1002. It is a heterogeneous population that therefore favors the search and obtaining of the information.

*The Sample*: It will consist of a total of 3 three English teachers who agreed to spontaneously participate in the application of the workshop and 35 students chosen at random, the intentional sampling technique was used. Only those students with a greater development in the English language were selected, according to their teachers, who being a sample with significantly small, we proceeded to work based on 100 percent of them.

Instrument and Technique

The data collection techniques that were used in this investigation will be from primary sources such as: *Direct non-participant observation.* It allows to diagnose the situation and describe the context of learning a language using different learning strategies, in the Eugenio Maria de Hosto School.

*Survey*.  It will be applied to the teaching staff to obtain information on the possible variables (learning strategy implemented by the students), before and after the intervention of the researchers.

The instrument for data collection was the *Strategic Inventory for Language Learning (SILL)*. For this, a conceptual analysis is carried out on the notion of learning strategy, its typologies and its possibilities of classification, in addition to its implications in light of what current psycho-pedagogical knowledge allows to offered.

Conclusion

The realization of this descriptive field research, developed with the participation of the students and professors of the basic cycle, allowed us to take preliminary steps in the study of the problem related to the different foreign language learning strategies. This problem indicated that there were statistically significant relationships between the different strategies implemented. In addition, the results of this study showed that, between different learning strategies, social and emotional. Therefore, the preferences of the student group should be considered, using language learning strategies and adjusting their teaching to meet the needs of students when they learn a second language. Also reflex the poor planning of the independent work of the students and the lack of awareness of the need to develop different learning strategies, as important factors that hindered the development of student autonomy. The qualitative analysis of the data collected in the interviews allowed us to establish that the students conceive the learning process as a practice of linguistic activities, where self-control and emotional and social aspects play an important role.

With regard to the use of learning strategies, both students and teachers believe that their teaching and use are of vital importance for the development of autonomy and establish differences in their use in English. However, students have little theoretical knowledge of strategies, without conscious use in their learning. The specific training of learning strategies is associated, as it could not be otherwise that students incorporate them effectively and efficiently in their work system through the acquisition of L2, for greater social use and even in contexts natural.

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