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要　　約

本稿は、日本における言語教室での学習者への言語教育方法に対する可能性を考察したものである。言語教育では主に、学習者に道具を使用させ、各自の学習過程を改善していく事を考慮している。過去の論文を再検討することにより、言語学習の概念と、教室での言語教育方針の使用の定義の考察を促進する。本稿では特に、学習方法とコミュニケーション方法の違いに注目する。二つの主な学習方法について、直接的、また間接的に論議する。直接的方法は目的言語の取得と利用について論議し、また、間接的方法は、学習者個人の学習過程と調和する方法を示している。両方の方針はほとんどの教室内では明らかに見ることができるが、それらの方針を使用する、という学習者教育は行われていない。最後に、学習者教育の論議は、日本の高校での言語教育の実例で示している。

Abstract

This article looks at the potential for learner training in language learning strategies in the Japanese classroom. Learner training is primarily concerned with equipping students with tools to control and improve their own learning processes. A review of the literature helps define the concept of learner training and the use of language learning strategies in the classroom. Specifically focusing on the difference between learning strategies and communication strategies. Two Primary categories of learning strategies are discussed, direct and indirect. Direct strategies deal with the use and production of the target language while indirect strategies help learners to coordinate their own learning process. While both types of strategies are evident in most classrooms learner training in the use of the strategies does not always accompany them. Finally, following a discussion of the issues involved in learner training is an example of learner training in a Japanese high school.

What is learner training?

Learner training is a concept that has been increasingly explored and focused on since the 1970's when studies were carried out on the good language learner and their styles and preferences (Rubin,1975; Stern, 1975; Naiman et.al, 1978). Their purpose was to find out what characteristics made up good language learners. These studies came away with extensive lists of strategies that were used by good language learners. By identifying the strategies used by the good language learner it was assumed that these strategies could then be imparted to the less successful language learner. These studies sparked a great interest in the communicative teaching language community,and today learner training can be seen as a developing field with practical implications for the language learning classroom. Learner training, also referred to as strategy training, is the application of both learning and communication strategies to classroom learning (Brown,2000: 130). O'Malley and Chamot (1990: 43) note that the distinction between learning

and communication strategies is an important one to make in second language acquisition. Learning strategies are focused on language acquisition, while communicative strategies are focused on language use. Learning strategies are motivated by a desire to learn the language and communicative strategies are motivated by a desire to communicate in the language. Although they are defined separately, there are significant overlaps between the definitions of learning and communicative strategies.

WHAT ARE LEARNING STRATEGIES

Oxford (1990: 8) defines learning strategies as "specific actions taken by the learner to make learning easier, faster, more enjoyable, more self-directed, more effective, and more transferable to new situations." In essence, learning strategies are what learners use to learn. At least one learning strategy is used in every learning task (Nunan:182). However it is often the case that most students and teachers are not fully aware of the strategies they are using or the range of strategies they could use for a particular task. Therefore learning strategies can further be defined as subconscious or conscious actions and techniques that are used for learning. Although learning strategies are by definition actions taken by the learner, they can be influenced by the teacher. That is to say, they are teachable (Oxford, 1990: 9).

TYPES OF LEARNING STRATEGIES

Rubin (1975) developed two primary categories of learner strategies, those that directly affect learning and those that indirectly affect learning. Those which directly affect learning are strategies such as classification/verification, monitoring, guessing/inductive, deductive/ inferencing and practice. Those which indirectly affected learning were creating opportunities for practice and production tricks. This classification scheme was based on interviews with good language learners (O'Malley & Chamot, 1990: 3). More recent classification schemes have been largely based on interviews with experts in the field of cognitive psychology and usually include cognitive,metacognitive, and social/affective strategies (O'Malley & Chamot, 1990: 44). A recent and extensive classification scheme often cited comes from Oxford (1990). Oxford has identified six major categories of learning strategies under the two headings, direct and indirect.

Direct Strategies

Direct strategies are ones that directly deal with the target language. They are specific actions that learners can use to internalize the language (Nunan: 170). Oxford (1990: 14) divides direct strategies into three groups: memory, cognitive, and compensation strategies.

Memory strategies – strategies that help the learner store and retrieve information. These are important in helping students sort through and remember the large amount of information given to them.

Cognitive strategies - strategies that enable learners to understand, produce and apply new language by various means. They are often found to be the most popular form of strategy used by language learners(Oxford 1990: .44)

Compensation strategies -strategies that enable learners to use language despite a lack of knowledge of the language. These strategies are some of the most important for beginning and intermediate students , as they may give students

the ability to communicate.

Indirect strategies

Indirect strategies help learners to coordinate their own learning processes. They support and manage learning without directly involving the target language. Oxford also divides these into three groups. *Metacognitive strategies* -strategies that allow learners to control their own cognition. Research shows that these strategies are essential for success, and used sporadically (Oxford, 1990: 138) *Affective strategies* - those that deal with emotions, attitudes, motivations and values. These are one of the biggest influences on a learners success or failure. Good language learners can be seen as those who know how to control their emotions and attitudes about learning. These strategies can help learning become more enjoyable. Although most researchers find these strategies to critical to the learning process they seem to be rarely used (Oxford 1990:143) . *Social strategies* are those that deal with the social aspect of learning. These strategies provides students with indirect feedback, practice opportunities, and a strong motivation factor. Importance of Learner Training Learner training is important because it aids learners in creating self-direction and autonomy in the learning process. It gives the learner more control over learning which can lead to greater motivation. Numerous studies have been done to show the positive correlations between effective learner training and successful language learning. Rubin (1975) and Naiman's (1978) studies were based on the idea that more effective learners differed from less effective learners in their use of strategies. Green and Oxford (1995) found a significant relationship between strategy use and learning success. Nunan (1997) reports that self report/self monitoring among university students in Hong Kong led to greater sensitivity to the learning process. O'Malley and Chamot's (1990) study also suggests that effective learners not only use strategies, but they know why they are using them. It has also been seen that a problem with less effective learners is not that they don't use strategies, but that the way they apply them is in a random, unconnected, and uncontrolled manner (Jones,1987). The difference between effective and less effective learners can be seen in the number and range of strategies used, in how they are used, and students metacognitive understanding of the task. If students are provided with appropriate strategies to learning tasks it can lead to a higher expectation for success. This will then lead to higher motivation, self-confidence, and self-efficacy.

ISSUES IN LEARNER TRAINING

Separate vs. Integrated instruction

There are two schools of thought on how learner training should be implemented. One argument is in favor of separate training programs, while the other is in favor of integrated training programs. Separate training programs has a focus solely on developing strategic processing skills. The rationale for this is that strategies are applicable to many contexts. The other calls for integrated instruction and argues that learning in context is more effective and provides immediate applicability of strategies to the task at hand. Proponents of integrated training argue that this kind of training will lead to a transfer of strategies to similar tasks encountered (O'Malley & Chamot:152).

Direct vs. Embedded instruction

Direct instruction informs students of the value and purpose of strategy training. Embedded instruction provides students with activities and tasks designed to elicit the strategies being taught, but without giving them reasons as to

why it is being taught. Embedded instruction may be the more attractive choice for many teachers since little training is needed, but direct instruction is recommend by many researchers (O'Malley & Chamot: 153).

Language Proficiency

When can strategy training most effectively be initiated? Many students may not have the language ability to deal with the terminology associated with learner training. In this case it may be best to have it implemented in the students native language (O'Malley & Chamot: 160). If this is not possible, instruction dealing with strategy training may have to be delayed.

Student characteristics

Students age, proficiency level, motivation, cultural background, learning style, and prior education may all play an important role in their ability to learn strategies. These are significant factors that may define the ease or difficulty with which new strategies can be trained, and should be considered when applying learner training (Oxford, 205).

Teacher training

Most effective strategy instruction appears to include demonstrating when a given strategy might be useful in addition to how to use and evaluate it (Nunan: 173). There are also issues concerning whether strategies being taught are relative to the task at hand and how well the tasks fit the learner's style preferences. These are all issues that would have to be solved through some form of teacher training. This was just a brief description of the more important issues involved in learner training and is intended to give the reader an idea of what entails learner training. For a more in-depth look at these issues it is suggested readers look into some of the extensive literature on the subject (for example see O'Malley & Chamot, 1990)

Learner training at a Japanese high school
Teaching at a Japanese high school

I teach at a high school in Japan. There are about 1000 students and I mainly teach the first and second year students, though I am sometimes called upon to help out with the third years lessons. Student ages range from 15 to 17 and they have had three to four years of english as a foreign language. Three years at the junior high school level and, in the case of the second year students,one year at the secondary level. Ninety percent of the students are male. Students can mostly be classified as being between the beginner and pre-intermediate stages of proficiency. Students are required to attend three English classes per week. Two with a focus on grammar and one with a focus on speaking, called oral communication (OC). All classes are 50 minutes. Although I am occasionally asked to participate in the grammar focused lessons the focus of this paper will be on the OC class.

Oral Communication Class

OC is a team taught class. Team teaching meaning one teacher is a native Japanese teacher of English (JTE) and the other is a native English teacher (ALT). There are five JTE's at the school and one ALT. At first arrival to the school I was given model lesson plans and a textbook to base lesson plans on. These plans were strict interpretations of the

PPP approach with room in the beginning for an introductory game or activity, often left up to the ALT. As time has passed I have been given the freedom to create my own lesson plans with the provision that the plans be based around the textbook. Within these lesson plans I have identified various learning strategies that come under both categories of direct and indirect strategies, as defined by Oxford, which we use in the classroom. It must be stated that specific examples given from my lessons here are just that, examples. They are intended to provide a representative view of strategies that are often found in the classroom.

Direct strategies found in my lessons
Grouping and Labelling Exercise

I have often presented the class with lists of vocabulary words from the day's lesson and previous lessons that they have to place in the correct categories. Sometimes the categories were given and other times they have to create their own categories. Students usually work in groups , and there is often a race to see which group can finish the categories correctly first. This activity helps students place new and old vocabulary words into a meaningful context that is organized. Grouping and labelling can provide students with a way to sort information and reduce it to smaller units that are easier to remember. Although this task is performed often in class the advantages of grouping and labelling, as stated above, was never discussed. The learner could benefit from a discussion before, during , and after about the benefits of grouping and labelling.

Cognitive Strategies
Where Am I?

For this listening task I made a map of the city and gave copies to each student. This gets their attention right away as they notice places around their own city on the map. I then think of a place I'd like to go and describe the city as I walk so students can follow the path chosen. Sometimes I stop and ask students where do you think I'm going, and other times I wait until the end and ask where am I, and and what will I do there. Students then work in groups to make their own path and present it to the class. This particular activity uses various cognitive strategies such as using resources, practicing naturalistically, and note taking. It also encourages other strategies such as guessing, using imagery, cooperating with peers, and paying attention.

Compensation strategies
Jigsaw Reading

In this reading task I give students a story, usually related to a lesson in the textbook, that is cut up into separate sentences. Students , usually in groups of 3 to 4, are then asked to put the story together in the correct order. Before beginning this activity I usually review with students words that mark time and order, such as first and second, before and after. This lesson works well for helping students use linguistic clues, structural clues, and background knowledge. In addition stories are usually presented with a short intro by the ALT or JTE about the subject matter. For this particular lesson the story was about a trip I took in Japan. Another layer might be added to this activity by adding preview questions, such as why did I go to that particular place? As is the case with both memory and cognitive strategies the training is embedded. There is a discussion about key words before the lesson, but it is not made clear

how this skill could help students in other learning situations. Students are therefore not made aware of how this strategy can be transferred to other tasks.

Indirect Strategies

On a macro level I start each year with the class devising a goal for the whole class. Often these are simple goals, such as this year we will have fun in OC, or this year we will speak more English in class. Though they are simple goals, I find it important and effective in setting a tone for the year. On a micro level almost all lessons, as well as the activities and tasks within, are begun with a discussion about the purpose of that particular lesson.. Often it is a simple introduction statement such as , "today we will be practicing talking on the phone". Sometimes this entails reviewing past material, such as key vocabulary words or phrases, that will be linked into the days lesson. Students are always encouraged to seek practice opportunities whether it is talking more with me, watching a movie in English, listening to music in English, or looking up English websites. In the city where the school is located there is a US naval base and students are encouraged to and often do listen to regular broadcasts. In addition to these suggestions whenever possible I give students in class projects that require them to write letters to, or read letters from, foreigners. I have set up a pen pal system with a school in the USA and had them write letters to aid workers in disaster areas. Underlying all of these activities are numerous direct and indirect strategies that would be better understood by the learner if they were discussed. Many students may not be aware of the importance behind these meta cognitive strategies, and therefore be less likely to utilize them on their own.

Affective Strategies

Looking through and thinking about past lessons I have found only one strategy that has been used to lower students anxiety, laughter. Through role playing, skits and active exercises involving gestures and other physical movements the tension that can sometimes be felt in a foreign language classroom is lowered. Students could benefit more from knowledge of a variety of techniques for lowering anxiety, such as listening to music or deep breathing exercises. In class students are always given positive statements of encouragement, but might benefit more from learning how to make positive statements about themselves. Many students in my classes are apathetic and discouraged when it comes to English. This could be due to many factors too lengthy for a discussion here, but positive self encouragement could go a long way in turning that around.

Social Strategies

In my classes I find a great deal of the language deals with social strategies. Students are encouraged to, and do, ask questions when they don't understand, need something repeated, or need something to be said slower. This is encouraged in the beginning of the year with a half a class being spent on the introduction of these phrases to the classroom. They are also provided with a print with these phrases in both English and Japanese. Many students have them memorized and if they don't they have the print in their notebook to refer to. Most activities and tasks are done in pairs or group work and students are encouraged to work together to complete them. Lessons are prepared with the mindset that cultural points be worked in whenever possible. Part of the job description of the ALT at the school is to be a cultural liason between the students and your home country.While all of these social strategies are present,

and sometimes explained, in the classroom more time could be spent in class discussing and modeling how these strategies can help them outside of the class as well. Without proper knowledge of how these strategies can be utilized students may not transfer them to their own personal language learning experience.

Learner training importance in Japan

In recent years there have been some studies done in Japan which suggest strategy training as an answer to frustrations with language learning (Rausch, 2000; Burden, 2002). Many students feel a lack of control in their learning process which can lead to less motivated student. In my own context I have heard the frustrations of many students about how they can't learn English because they don't know how, and it is clearly evident that many students have already given up after three years of English at junior high school. A logical answer to this problem would be to give students the knowledge and power through step by step instruction of learning strategies to take control of their own learning. Having the ability to take control of their own learning will lead to a more self-confident, self-efficient,and motivated student (Oxford:10)

Summary

Through an examination of the strategies above and their role in the classroom, and researching other possible strategies that haven't been utilized, it has become clear that while strategies do have a strong underlying presence in my classes they may not be having their desired effect. Students have more than likely been practicing many of the strategies listed above, if only because many of the tasks and activities require them to. There is also the possibility that many students do not fully understand how to put these strategies into practice. All lessons are started with a goal of producing a learner who will be able to practice, study, and use English more productively on their own. In essence, aid them in becoming autonomous learners. Adding discussions and activities before, during, and after the tasks that contain them would be very beneficial to the students at my school. Classes are only once a week for fifty minutes. This is a limited amount of time and could be better spent detailing and practicing strategies for learning English. The difference between being successful or not for some learners, if not all, may be in the highlighting, detailing, and discussion of strategies.

Issues in Learner Training at a Japanese high school
Implementation

Working at the school and being given the freedom to create lesson plans based around topics in the textbook does not give me the ability to just begin learner training. Learner training is still a rathernew concept being researched and its validity, though quickly becoming more and more valid, is still being tested around the world. Implementing learner training into the classroom would and should require discussion, research, and training for all teachers involved.

Language Proficiency

Being an ALT allows for the added advantage of having a native speaker of Japanese in the classroom. My students are still beginners and probably do not have the language proficiency needed to talk about strategy training.

Introducing this language slowly into the classroom with discussion and explanation in Japanese could provide a larger benefit for the students.

Teacher Training

More information is needed about students learning styles, preferences, and use of strategies. This information may be attained through any one of various activities, questionnaires, and interview procedures found while researching learner strategies(Oxford, 1990; Brown, 2001, Nunan, 1990). Many of these answers may or may not be determined by the students cultural background, but it is something that calls for further research. In addition to ascertaining information about students I might also consider thinking about furthering my own teacher training in this field.

Conclusion

It has come to my attention that many of the activities and tasks used in my own lessons have numerous strategies underlying them, and that these strategies should be taking a more central role in the classroom. By bringing these strategies to the forefront, discussing them and applying them in a more structured, detailed manner students may begin to take more control of their learning processes.

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