Understanding Learning Preferences: Affective vs Cognitive Strategies in Language Learning

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Abstract
Language learning strategies are essential in learning a language to enhance language acquisition, optimize learning outcomes, and empower learners with effective tools to navigate and communicate in a new language. Language learning strategy preference refers to the individual's tendency to gravitate towards some strategies that they prefer the most. The main purpose of this research being conducted was to identify the language learning strategies preferred by the students. This study was carried out to a total of 30 respondents from Tamil school background. The method used to collect data was a quantitative research design to study about the cognitive and affective strategies and identify the preferred strategies between cognitive and affective strategies. This study utilized quantitative data and involved descriptive analysis. The results showed that cognitive strategies are more preferred than affective strategies. However, this study highlights the significance of both cognitive and affective strategies in language learning. By striking a balance between these strategies, educators can create comprehensive language learning experiences that cater to students' cognitive and emotional needs. The findings offer valuable guidance for educators to design effective language learning programmes that could optimize language learning outcomes among pupils.
Keywords: Language Learning Strategies, Cognitive, Affective, Learning Preferences.

Introduction
Teaching has been extremely vital and acknowledged as the most important part of the education system due its ability in adapting, adopting, and influencing the quality of the education system and its learners (Öztürk & Yıldırım, 2014). Being an educationist is a tough task in the current situation where educators tend to apply and cultivate various teaching and learning strategies to ensure students or pupils achieve the content of the lesson as well as having the objectives achieved. Goldhaber (2007); Rockoff (2014) supported the claim above that the quality of education and the service of the educators now has been a talk and educators will probably offer higher quality education to their students. Teaching is not as

easy as it is as most educators are bound to seek various strategies to be used in the classroom setting for the students to achieve the teaching and learning objectives. Azar (2011), Instefjord and Munthe (2016), and Rafique (2014) also stated that teachers play an important role and teacher education is extremely vital in every country.

Boon (2011) conducted a study on School Moves, Coping, and Achievement: Models of Possible Interactions found that analyses applied to a theoretical model creates positive coping strategies that protect students from behavioral problems. Students tend to move schools due to various reasons, financial background, social economic problems, structural factors and many more. Wood et al (1993) supported the above statement by mentioning that children move 50-100% due to learning disorder, a delay in growth or development, or to have four or more behavioral problems infrequently. Simpson and Fowler (1994) also support the statement above by mentioning that children with mobile families tend to have more behavioral, and emotional variables as they tend to get confused on how to solve problems, analyse problems and many more. Folman and Lazarus (1085) stated that the definition of coping which means constantly changing cognitive and behavioral efforts to manage demands is quite tedious. They also mentioned that emotional breakdown happens when an individual perceives that he or she can't manage the demands of a situation. In saying that, they describe different types of coping; problem focus coping and emotion-focused coping where these two types of coping are usually deployed together to varying degrees.

Language learning strategies usually associate preconceived beliefs on factors contributing to the variation. A successful language learner will usually utilize the more effective strategies than less prominent learners (Chamot, 2004). Learners believe in applying language strategies, it helps in a holistic approach towards the lesson. The plethora of language learning strategies have been introduced by educators, but the application of those strategies has been a little concerning. The learner's previous belief and their variation have been an issue in applying strategies in the classroom. Language learning beliefs are defined as the standard that students have been holding themselves about for quite some time and the nature of language learning strategies itself (Victori & Lockhart, 1995, p. 224). In addition to the statement above, previous language learning experiences and cultural background are often considered as the standard that they have been holding for quite some time and the assumptions about the language learning that are likely to shape and process on how they approach the task.

Horwitz's (1985) first initiated in investigating the learner's belief and how they were influenced by language learning strategies. Horwitz mentioned that if belief is the main source of cultural and social background, then the students will bring this belief to the classroom setting. To support his idea, he designed an instrument on Belief About Language Learning Inventory (BALI) to assess and evaluate students' opinions on various issues and topics about language learning. Horwitz and other researchers (Chang & Shen, 2010; Daif-Allah, 2012; Li, 2010) followed him and classified that there 5 major learners' belief which are "foreign language aptitude", "difficulty of language learning", "nature of language learning", "learning and communication strategies", and "motivation and expectations.". Conklin (2005) mentioned that it is extremely crucial to work with three main domains mainly affective, cognitive and psychomotor. He also added that it is vital to acknowledge different ways on how children learn and encourage them to align towards their surroundings since learning theories have existed for quite a while in the field of education.

Language learning strategies on the other hand are strategies used by learners to take and achieve their goals Chamot (2004, p. 14). Therefore, in an attempt to make sure learners adapt the learning context, specific action needs to be taken in order to make learners' learning easier, faster, enjoyable, more directed and many more Wenden (1991, p. 31). The educators and teachers need to regulate ideas and modules to conduct lessons or tasks in the class. Oxford (1990) classified 2 major strategies in language learning which are direct strategy and indirect strategy. Winne (2011); Zimmerman (2011) shared that students who obtain various cognitive and meta-cognitive strategies tend to gain more knowledge and have a higher academic performance compared to the rest. They perform well, acquire positive impact and are prominent to use strategies.

Studies and researchers have shown that students tend to use emotions in facilitating or inhabitant the use of strategies (e.g., Bromme et al., 2010; Richter & Schmid, 2010), self-related beliefs (e.g., Garcia & Pintrich, 1994; Schunk & Usher, 2011; Zimmerman, 2000), achievement goals (e.g., Wolters, 2004), task values (Battle & Wigfield, 2003), and interest (e.g., Hidi & Ainley, 2008) among others (for an overview see also Hodis et al., 2011; Walkey et al., 2013; Wigfield et al., 2011). According to Titz (2001), he found that students who instill positive emotions and hope tend to remove negative emotions, anger, anxiety, and boredom. Turner et al. (1998) supported the statement above that negative emotions were detrimental to work with. Elliot and Maier (2009) also support the statement above agreeing that positive emotions are relatively related to the students' scores and performances. Villavicencio and Bernardo (2013) found that enjoyment and pride were positive predictors of grades among undergraduate students (see also Villavicencio, 2011). Thus, this mini research is conducted to examine and investigate the differences in learning preferences between cognitive and affective strategies among students in national schools.

The gap for understanding learning preferences between affective (emotional) and cognitive (intellectual) strategies in education could encompass several aspects that remain underexplored or insufficiently studied. The realm of understanding learning preferences in education, particularly the interplay between affective (emotional) and cognitive (intellectual) strategies, presents intriguing research gaps that merit deeper exploration. While prior studies have shed light on the individual impacts of these strategies, a comprehensive investigation into their interaction remains lacking. A critical juncture lies in deciphering how emotions are intricately intertwined with cognitive processes during learning, and reciprocally, how cognitive strategies might influence affective responses. Moreover, the role of contextual factors, such as cultural backgrounds, socioeconomic status, age, and learning environments, demands further scrutiny in shaping the efficacy of these strategies. Unraveling the intricate web of how these factors intersect with preferences for affective or cognitive approaches could unravel tailored educational approaches.

This study aims to understand learning preferences through cognitive and affective strategies in English language learning holds significant value for language educators and researchers. By uncovering students' preferred strategies, the study offers valuable insights into effective language learning approaches. The findings can guide educators in tailoring language programs that align with students' preferences, making the learning experience more engaging and motivating.

Literature Review

Definition of Learning preferences

Ormrod (2007) stated that learning is an experience' result from effective mental representation or association altering for long term. Value and information are learned by students from the classroom which attract their interest to enjoy any teaching and learning process. Different terms used in identifying the word learning such as cognitive style, learning style, personal type and sensory preferences (Masitowarni, 2020). However, Cassidy (2004) believed that sometimes the terms used differentiated based on the occasion in language learning even if it is interchangeable. Every student has different preferences in learning which prove that everyone is unique with their own choices. Identification in learning preferences among students can help them acquire problem-solving skills. When students manage to solve problems without help from others, then more and more they take ownership of their learning in education (Biggs, 2011). Cognitive strategies are processes that are procedural, purposeful, effortful, willful, essential and facilitative to make progress toward a certain problem or other complete tasks (Dinsmore et al., 2019). Affective strategies are techniques such as time management skill, maintaining attention, reducing anxiety with relaxing, identifying negative emotion features, increasing language self-esteem and decreasing anxiety in language learning that help individuals manage their emotions and attitudes well.

Affective Strategy Versus Cognitive Strategy in language learning

Wijirahayyu and Dorand (2019) studied "affective strategies, attitude and a model of speaking performance development for engineering students' to know the important factors that may influence the progress of the speaking and attitude. The instruments of the research used are surveys involving two main psychological variables in affective learning namely affective strategies and attitude, and speaking performance with a model of affective strategies in language learning. The sample of the research involved 71 participants and two classes of University students majoring in Telecommunication Engineering and Electrical Engineering. The finding shows that the affective strategies function to cope with the emotional state such as anxiety reduction and self-encouragement, it plays an important role on speaking performance together with orientation. Meanwhile, in order to determine high or low off affective strategy is depending on teaching and learning in a certain classroom.

Win et al (2019) stated that cognitive strategies are strategies that improve and develop a learner's ability to receive and process the information more accurately, then transfer and apply it into new situations and result will better-retain learning. The research aimed to identify behavioral change in the teaching of cognitive learning strategies. The sample used was pediatric educators who have joined the national conference workshop. The five cognitive learning strategies are identified: i) space retrieval practice, ii) interleaving, iii) elaboration, iv) generation and v) reflection. The instrument used was using an active learning exercise. The finding showed that 82% of participants reported implementing a change based on the workshop, with 77% of participants implementing a change that they had committed to directly after the workshop and 55% implementing a change that they had not originally committed to at the end of the workshop. For further study, researchers anticipate more study will be carried out on the same topic which can lead to behavioral change in teaching of cognitive learning strategies.

Interpretation from the past studies on Affective and Cognitive Strategies

Kiener and Weaver (2011) have carried out the stud to examine how students thought about and complete coursework. The sample used 53 undergraduate and graduate students to participate in two semester study. The instruments used by employing learning strategies, both cognitive and affective to support complete coursework by applying time management skills and seeking an increasing comfort as a measurement of study. The findings showed that time management skill emerged as the primary cognitive learning strategy, whereas seeking comfort with content was most cited as an effective learning strategy. However, the limitation of this research was that the majority of the respondents were graduate rehabilitation counseling students, and it is unclear how graduate students who have a focused curriculum impacted the findings.

Learning strategies among students can be interpreted as having similarities with self-regulation learnings. Students who demonstrate self-regulatory learning could plan, fix goals, monitor learning and as a result, it will take a more active role in the way they learn (Van Den Hurk, 2006). The relationship between approaches and self-regulatory show effectiveness by emphasizing on time management skill. Tinnesz et al (2006) agreed that having ample amounts of time provides opportunities for students to practice and apply course material. Terry and Doolittle (2008) found that an increase in students' time management skill would cause their educational self-efficacy or self-regulatory learning to also increase. Although time management skills are important, additional learning strategies are also needed to facilitate deep learning approaches and self-regulatory learning (Kiener & Weaver, 2011).

Methodology
Research Design
This study employed a quantitative research design to focus on comparative analysis of cognitive and affective language learning strategies, The design allowed for the measurement of participants' and selection and utilization of language learning strategies. This study involved descriptive analysis. The researcher selected a random sample using convenience sampling, which consisted of 30 participants from a primary school.

Population and Sample (Primary Learners)
A total of 30 respondents from Tamil school students in Malaysia participated in the survey. The respondents are year 6 students from a primary Tamil school. The samples consisted of 20 males and 10 females.

Research Instrument (Strategy inventory Language learning Strategy)
Questionnaires or inventories are commonly used to assess the learners' use of language learning strategies. The most recent and complete strategy scale often used around the world at this time is SILL (the Strategy Inventory for Language Learning) The questionnaire will be administered to the selected primary school students in the ESL classroom. Primarily, the SILL was designed as an instrument for assessing the frequency of use of language learning strategies by students at primary school. According to research reports and articles, published in the English language within the last ten to fifteen years, the SILL appears to be the only language learning strategy questionnaire that has been extensively checked for reliability and validated in multiple ways (Oxford, 1996).

The instrument (SILL) consists of a series of statements or items that prompt participants to indicate how often they use specific language learning strategies and their

preferences for employing these strategies. The questionnaire is divided into two main categories with five prompts and statements in each category. Under the cognitive category, there are items that assess learners' cognitive approaches to language learning, such as using memory techniques, practicing target language structures, and seeking out language input from authentic sources.Whereas, the affective category involves items that explore learners' emotional and motivational approaches to language learning. It includes strategies related to reducing anxiety, boosting confidence, and managing emotions during language learning.

Data Analysis
Data were collected online and analyzed using the SPSS 27.0 The 5 items for each language learning strategies were identified and simplified based on primary students level. The students were requested to choose "never", "sometimes" and "often" A descriptive analysis was used to determine whether there was a meaningful difference between categories of language learning strategies. Descriptive statistics were used to determine the percentages in both questionnaires.

Findings & Discussion
The 30 respondents of this study are students from a Tamil school that have voluntarily taken part in this study and provided their feedback and insights which have helped and impact this study greatly.

Table 1
Gender of respondents

Gender	Percentage
Male	66.7%
Female	33.3%
Total	100%

The table shows the percentage of samples in each gender category, where 66.7% of the respondents are male, 33.3% are female, and the total percentage sums up to 100%. The research question of the study is answered using the data gathered from the SILL questionnaire. The SILL consists of a series of statements or items that prompt participants to indicate how often they use specific language learning strategies and their preferences for employing these strategies. The questionnaire is divided into two main strategies that are mainly studied in this study: Cognitive Strategies and Affective Strategies.

Table 2. Strategy Inventory Language Learning Questionnaire

Question	Never (%)	Sometimes (%)	Often (%)
Cognitive Strategies:			
"I try to talk like native English speakers"	3.3%	70%	26.7%
"I watch English language TV shows or go to movies spoken in English"	10%	80%	10%
"I write notes, messages, and letters in English"	6.7%	63.3%	30%
"I look for words in my own language that are similar to new words in English"	6.7%	66.7%	16.7%

Question	Never (%)	Sometimes (%)	Often (%)
"I read for pleasure in English"	3.3%	40%	56.7%
Affective Strategies:			
"I try to relax whenever I feel afraid of using English"	13.3%	70%	16.7%
"I encourage myself to speak English even when I am afraid of making mistakes"	20%	56.7%	23.3%
"I notice if I am tense or nervous when I am studying or using English"	16.7%	66.7%	16.7%
"I talk to someone else about how I feel when I am learning English"	16.7%	70%	13.3%
"I give myself a reward or treat when I try to use English"	0%	53.3%	46.7%

Table 2 shows the responses for each question on the Strategy Inventory Language Learning Questionnaire. The percentages represent how many participants selected each response option (Never, Sometimes, Often) for each strategy, categorized into Cognitive Strategies and Affective Strategies. The research question is answered using data gathered through this study. There are differences in learning preferences between cognitive and affective strategies among national school students. Based on the responses from the students, it appears that cognitive strategies are more preferred than affective strategies. Among the cognitive strategies, "watching English language TV shows or movies" and "writing notes, messages, and letters in English" were the most preferred, with 80% and 63.3% of the students respectively reporting that they use these strategies sometimes. Additionally, "reading for pleasure in English" was also a popular cognitive strategy, with 56.7% of the students reporting that they often read for enjoyment.

However, among the affective strategies, "trying to relax whenever feeling afraid of using English" and "encouraging oneself to speak English even when afraid of making mistakes" were the most preferred, with 70% and 56.7% of the students respectively reporting that they use these strategies sometimes. The data clearly shows that a higher proportion of students prefer cognitive strategies with three out of five strategies were voted to be more commonly used the top two affective strategies. By analyzing the students' responses, it could be concluded that cognitive strategies, like "watching English language TV shows or movies," "writing notes, messages, and letters in English," and "reading for pleasure in English," are more preferred overall compared to affective strategies. However, it is very important to note that both types of strategies play a vital role in language learning, and a combination of cognitive and affective strategies can lead to more effective language acquisition and a positive learning experience.

Conclusion and Implications
An insightful finding is obtained through the study on understanding learning preferences through cognitive and affective strategies in English language learning. It is evident that among the cognitive strategies, students expressed a strong preference for activities like watching English language TV shows or movies, engaging in writing exercises, and reading for pleasure. This suggests that it is important to incorporate authentic language input and

enjoyable reading materials in language learning program. Moreover, among affective strategies, students showed a keen interest in trying to relax when feeling afraid of using English and encouraging themselves to speak despite the fear of making mistakes. These findings imply that improving the learning environment for pupils can help them learn languages more effectively.

These conclusions offer valuable implications for language educators and instructors. Recognizing the strategy preference can aid in developing tailored teaching approaches. It is important to include activities that students find enjoyable and engaging. By doing this, educators can foster a more positive and motivating learning environment. Students should be exposed to authentic language input and cultural nuances and enhance their language comprehension and fluency by using English media like movies, songs, and scenes. Moreover, addressing students' emotional challenges through the promotion of relaxation techniques and positive self-talk can help alleviate anxiety and boost students' confidence in using English.

In conclusion, it is evident through this study that cognitive strategies are more preferred than affective strategies. However, this study highlights the significance of both cognitive and affective strategies in language learning. By striking a balance between these strategies, educators can create comprehensive language learning experiences that cater to students' cognitive and emotional needs. The findings offer valuable guidance for educators to design effective language learning program that could optimize language learning outcomes among pupils.

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