
RESEARCH ARTICLE

Strategic Talk in TTT and Students' Self-reported Strategy Use: A Moroccan EFL Classroom

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ABSTRACT

The present study aimed to examine 'strategic talk' in teachers' talking time (TTT) and students' strategic awareness. This was carried out in a model classroom involving a group of 25 Moroccan EFL baccalaureate students from Lalla Aicha high school, Rabat. Oxford (1990) Strategy Inventory of Language Learning (SILL) was used to assess students' level of strategic awareness, and two teacher observations were carried out for the qualitative side of the paper. The mixing of methods was encouraged by the objective of exploring variations in the type of LLS students report to use, whether there were any instances in teacher talking time (TTT) that matched the reported choice of students, and/or seemed to motivate it. Accordingly, the findings revealed metacognitive strategies as the most reported LLS utilized by students, and cognitive strategies being the least. The qualitative observation demonstrated this pattern in how the TTT mainly consisted of the teacher managing and directing students' cognition, and wherein little room was given to any kind of form of reflective thinking other than answering subject related questions. Nevertheless, students who reported high level of use of both cognitive and metacognitive strategies, together, showcased a high score for the remaining categories as well. This implies that cognitive endeavors are the vehicle of metacognition, and together they can lead to positive and educated actions in learning.

KEYWORDS

EFL, language learning strategies, strategic talk, teacher talking time

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1. Introduction

Teachers have a great influence on students' language learning, academic performance, and their level of involvement in the classroom. With the more communicative- oriented approaches of learning prevailing in the teaching practices and trends nowadays, students' involvement and pair/ group activities have been emphasized, and student- centeredness has become the expected outlook. This is in accordance with the recent changes and development in language teaching and learning theory, and the alienation towards more self- regulated and more strategic learning. Recent research has also confirmed a strong link between language learning strategies (LLS), proficiency, and academic performance (Habok et al., 2022), as more proficient students were found to employ various strategy types compared to less proficient learners (Bessai, 2018). Consequently, the notion that foreign language learners can become more successful and effective in their learning by utilizing self- regulated LLS has been reinforced, as well as the idea that students will be able to regulate their learning process employing various LLS; influencing their own language proficiency and performance (Habok et al., 2022). Still, teachers have a considerable impact on the extent to which the English as a foreign language (EFL) classroom provides the right circumstances that can lead to more and more learner involvement (Shamsipour and Allami, 2012).

By virtue of such basis, teacher talking time (TTT) refers to the amount the teacher spends talking during class time, be it as a part of a lecture or in discussions. An alternative wording would be the time spent instructing, lecturing, managing, or/and organizing the lesson; oftentimes, it means the teacher feeding students information that they could be finding out by themselves,

such as grammar rules, vocabulary meaning, and /or error correction (Popovikj and Stojchevska, 2019). However, TTT in each lesson is not the same. It varies depending on both the specific goals of the syllabus and the teacher's pedagogical principles (Hitotuzi, 2005). In much research, TTT, within EFL classrooms, has been evaluated and critically criticized in accordance to how much opportunities for students' L2 practice time it allowed to take place. In fact, much research on TTT mainly focused on its quantity rather than its content and the extent to which it can be further utilized to better direct students' learning. For this, and as Nourhach (2022) argues, rather than comparing the quantity of TTT or student talking time (STT) in the classroom, we should concentrate on the quality of both. Darn (2007) also added that it would be best to be aware of the quality of the TTT and how it is used, rather than trying to reduce it to a bare minimum. Considering the preestablished importance of LLS for language learning, in general, the present paper aims to look more into this phenomenon through this new proposed lens by examining strategic talk in TTT as well as assessing students' strategic awareness with reference to this latter, with the objective of generating any valuable outcomes that would help better the language learning experience.

2. Literature Review

Language learning is a complex social process and a dynamic system that is managed by the teacher and the learners (Firth and Wagner, 1997). The language learning classroom involves a series of interrelated contexts, in which interaction is central to the teaching and learning process (Shamsipour and Allami, 2012). For the past three decades, a growing body of research has emerged about language learning, strategy use, and their possible effect on language proficiency, the belief that students can be more successful and effective language learners with LLS use. Indeed, a strong connection between LLS and academic performance has been reinforced by most studies (Habok et al., 2022). This is aligned with the idea that "every learning process requires a manner and strategy to be adapted to in order to achieve the main purpose of learning" (Hardan, 2013, p.1713).

Cognitive psychology, too, has consistently emphasized that LLS help learners assimilate new information into their own mental structures or schemata, and that the appropriate use of LLS enables learners to take charge of their own learning, enhancing their autonomy, independence, and self-direction (Oxford and Nyikos, 1989). Unlike other learner characteristics, such as motivation, personality, attitude, aptitude, LLS are teachable, and they allow learners to keep on learning even when they are no longer in the classroom setting. This explains why research on LLS is oftentimes linked with successful learners (Hardan, 2013). As Williams and Burden (1997) display, learners, who are equipped with several resources when involved in a learning task, use LLS, in various ways, to solve a task.

Therefore, and by virtue of the important role LLS play in the learning process, many scholars have defined and classified this latter differently. Nevertheless, most of these attempts have more or less the same categorization without any radical changes (Hardan, 2013). Most of them established such categorization based on the proposition that LLS play an important role in making learning more efficient and effective (Chamot, 1993; Cohen, 1990; O'Malley and Chamot, 1990; Oxford, 1990, 1993; Oxford and Crookall, 1989; Rubin, 1975; Wenden and Rubin, 1987; as cited in Flaitz, 1995).

One of the most comprehensive LLS taxonomies is that developed by Rebecca Oxford, with regards to the strategic aspects of language learning (Habok, 2022). In 1990, she defined them as "specific actions taken by the learner to make learning easier, faster, and more enjoyable, more self-directed and more transferable to new situations" (p.8). They are operations that good language learners use to aid the acquisition, storage and retrieval of information. These strategies include 'memory' and 'cognitive strategies' for linking new information to already existing one in long-term memory and for constructing and reconsidering new mental models, 'metacognitive strategies' for performing control by planning, monitoring and evaluating their own language learning process, 'social strategies' for managing interactions with others and directing discourse, 'affective strategies' for governing feelings, attitudes and motivations towards learning, and 'compensation strategies' for overcoming language related deficiencies, such as guessing from context while reading and listening or using gestures while speaking. Good language learners are said to generally use strategies appropriate to their own needs and point of learning, age, learning style, purpose of learning, and personality (Oxford and Nyikos, 1989). This conception, however, still sparked great controversy among scholars as other definitions and classes were proposed, but no novel categories were evident that were much different in description, and the validity of Oxford's taxonomy still prevailed throughout the years.

In our rapidly changing world, the main aim for teachers is to help students develop schemes that will not become obsolete (Noushad, 2008). LLS, in turn, promote independent learning even outside the classroom context. At the same time, developing a repertoire of LLS can only be brought about by having students exposed to such knowledge (Miceli and Visocnik, 2005). According to Oxford (2011), "...learning strategies, which are 'intentional and deliberate', must not be confused with skills, which are 'automatic out of awareness'" (p.11). This implies that language teachers should actively assist and support students' LLS awareness, and growth. Shamsipour and Allami (2012) findings also supported the determinant role teacher-talk has in the performance of foreign language learners. Cohen (1998) corroborates this view asserting that teachers take a crucial position in making learners more aware of the different range of strategies, the inclusion of strategy training as part of the foreign language classroom, for instance. There are, in fact, many instances in which teachers can touch upon and target the development of such

awareness. One way would be the choice of language, and the decision-making concerning interaction. The teacher's feedback on activities can be an occasion to use for strategy demonstration. Careful questioning is also significant, such as posing thoughtful questions, prompting students to select and use strategies, while also raising their awareness about how and why they use them (Ellis et al., 2014).

The shared discourse about cognition and learning among students and teachers helps students become even more aware of their own strategies for thinking and learning. As students hear and witness how others approach a task and the teacher's demonstration, comparisons can be made, and critical judgments and revisions can be drawn. The explicit labelling and discussion help students connect their current strategies to what they already may know. Making such discussions part of the everyday discourse of the classroom fosters the development of a *language* for students to use, to talk about their cognition (Pintrich, 2002). This is what we call 'strategic talk'.

Strategic- talk helps make cognition and learning more explicit rather than something that happens mysteriously or something that some students can develop, and others can't or struggle with. It's a matter of access, because students often lack the means to gain access to this knowledge, and if this knowledge is never shared through discussion, modelling, or explicit noting, it would be difficult for students to learn it (Pintrich, 2002). The talking about thinking cues students to build a thinking vocabulary, and having the teacher think aloud, too, enables students to easily follow the demonstrated thinking process by themselves (Blackey, 2011).

The most prominent aspect of strategic talk and LLS is not merely the kind of strategies students employ and what they choose not to. It is about the fact that "they choose to exert creative effort in trying to improve their own learning" (Habok et al., 2022). Nevertheless, in the present pedagogical context of crowded curricula and high demands of the language learning classroom, teachers often perceive the teaching of strategies as an extra burden (Chamot, 1993). In point of fact, many teachers can be uncomfortable, as they themselves might have never been trained in the use of LLS, and it is still unclear how best to proceed in training students in the effective use of these strategies due to previously mentioned constraints, such as insufficient room in the curriculum and lack of teacher training (Flaitz, 1995). This is because there is a difference between raising general awareness and that of training which involve greater commitment, time, and focused attention. Yet, knowing that LLS are central to learning, and its awareness raising has been proved to show increase in performance, it is imperative that researchers investigate more the extent to which such latter is apparent in multiple contexts, its overarching awareness, and the manner through which it is portrayed or failed to.

Most research on LLS has focused on the identification, description, and classification of strategies; the frequency of use and learners' success using them; differences in age, gender, language proficiency level, and cultural background impact on strategy use; or strategy training effect on LLS use (Hardan, 2013). Even the work on TTT was limited to reducing it because of the negative effect it has on the language learning process. In respect to this, the present paper aims at looking at LLS from a different angle by examining 'strategic talk' in TTT as a baseline for observation. This is with the attempt to formulate a description of the extent to which the teacher talks about strategies, considering student-teacher interaction as well. Students' strategic awareness will also be assessed in correspondence to the Moroccan context being observed, with the objective of answering the following research questions:

- What is the level of the self-reported strategic awareness Moroccan baccalaureate students show? Do they vary in the type of LLS they report to use?
- Do elements observed in TTT match Moroccan baccalaureate students' LLS use? Are there any instances in TTT that seem to motivate the reported choice of LLS of Moroccan baccalaureate students?

3. Methodology

This study adopts a mixed method research design, more specifically the embedded design type. The qualitative data is used to explain and/or provide context for the quantitative survey results. This is with the aim of generating comprehensive answers to the research questions stated above. In the course of conducting this study, despite technically using the convenient sampling technique, there is a randomization involved, in a sense, as the school from which the data was collected assigned the class of students to the researcher. The targeted population of the study is Moroccan EFL high school baccalaureate students' (or high school seniors, known worldwide).

3.1 Participants

The participant of the study involve a group of twenty-five baccalaureate students (n=25), science branch, from Lalla Aicha high school in Rabat, Morocco, studying English as a Foreign language (EFL). Choosing high school seniors was motivated by the reality that they are the closest to joining the higher education context, and are in major need of such tactics and tools. They were also great representatives of the pre- higher education context, and would provide the juice for all its years of study.

Ergo, the students were of the same age, 17 years old turning 18, and they are all assumed to have studied English for the past four years only, the final year of middle school alongside the three years of high school, as followed by the Moroccan educational system. Although changes are expected to be made in the near future. The teacher teaching the language and whose class the data was collected from is of 35 years of teaching experience. She gladly accepted to participate in the study upon the request of the administration and the authorization submitted accordingly.

3.2 Instrument

The data in this research was collected through triangulating two data collection methods, a survey questionnaire and an observation. The latter took the form of a 'naturalistic observation' with the researcher observing and taking note of what took place in a normal lesson involving the participants, with the aim of capturing the authentic input and help answer the paper's researcher questions. The survey questionnaire utilized was an Arabic adaptation of the Oxford (1990) Strategy Inventory of Language Learning (SILL), to prevent any language related challenges, considering students' level of English and bearing in mind the technical words contained.

The SILL is an assessment tool developed by Oxford in line with her six categories taxonomy of LLS to test, describe, and analyze the frequency of LLS use for foreign and second language learning. The SILL was designed as a self-evaluation measure, and it is the most popular instrument in LLS research. The flexibility the SILL provided in terms of its convenience for adaptation has contributed to its global success despite some of the criticisms, and it has expanded to attaining a prominent role in mixed method research. The SILL is comprised of 50 statements that comprehensively describe strategic actions, which learners are to rate on a 5-point Likert-scale. The instrument shows in numbers how often learners use LLS overall and which type of strategies they prefer (Amerstorfer, 2018). The items are grouped into Oxford's (1990) six strategy categories formerly introduced in the literature review section. The following table offers a summary of the strategy categorization observed in the SILL.

Table 1: Strategic Categorization in the SILL

Direct Strategies	Part A (Item 1-9) Part B (Item 10-23) Part C (Item 24-29)	Memory Strategies Cognitive Strategies Compensation Strategies
Indirect Strategies	Part D (Item 30-38) Part E (Item 39-44) Part F (Item 45-50)	Metacognitive Strategies Affective Strategies Social Strategies

3.3 Validity and reliability of the research instrument

The utility and reliability of the original SILL has been reported in an overwhelming number of research affirming its high consistency. The Cronbach's alpha value in those studies ranged between .90 and .94 (Oxford, 1990; Ehrman & Oxford, 1990; Wharton, 2000; Yang, 1996; Oxford & Burry-Stock, 1995). High validity is also evident. This is on the basis of the questionnaire items matching Oxford (1990) categorization scheme, and concurrent qualities. However, since the case of this study requires an Arabic version of the survey questionnaire, the researcher ended up adopting Ismail & Al Katib (2013) Arabic translation of the SILL as it showed the highest level of reliability (.95) compared to any other Arabic versions of the SILL used in previous studies, such as Khalil (2005), Radwan (2011), Shmais (2003), Riazzi (2007) and Al-Shaboul, Asassfeh, & Al Shboul (2010) (as cited in Ismail & Al Katib, 2013). The translation involved certified and experienced translators and Arabic professional editors who carried the task.

The Cronbach's Alpha was retested, for this study, using the SPSS (29.0 version), Table 2 below demonstrates the value found and showing how the items are acceptable and reliable in measuring the respondent frequency of LLS use. For validity, the total of the variables was computed first before running Pearson's correlation coefficient. The obtained value has an average of (.864) which is greater than the critical value at 23 of degree of freedom ($N=25-2=23$; $23\text{ DF} (.05)=.396$) indicating the validity of the questionnaire.

Table 2: Arabic SILL Cronbach's Alpha

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.892	50

3.4 Procedure

To collect the data, the researcher submitted an authorization paper to Lalla Aicha high school administration asking for permission to carry out the study, in April 2024. Immediate cooperation was shown from the school staff, and a random baccalaureate class was assigned to the researcher to attend after getting in touch with its teacher. The observation was executed first. The teacher was informed about the aim of the research, and that she should just perform her lesson as usual. Accordingly, the researcher sat at the end of the class observing and taking notes of the English lesson taking place. For the survey questionnaire, SILL, was left till the last 15 minute of the class time, in which the participants received a short introduction about the aim of the study, and how their volunteering and honest answers would tremendously help with generating accurate and relevant findings. They were informed that their responses were completely anonymous and confidential. The inventory was in Arabic to avoid any language barriers and the participant were free to ask questions any time. It was additionally highlighted how it's not an actual exam and there were no correct answers. What was most important is the expression of their pure personal experience. The researcher also attended another English class of the same teacher, but a different group of students of the same level as the previous the participants in question. This took place immediately after the first one observed, and to make sure that the researcher captured everything and to have as much input as possible since one observation wouldn't have been enough.

3.5 Data analysis

The SILL data was computed according to Oxford's (1990) proposed guidelines; in which "the numbers indicated for each strategy category are added up and divided by the number of statements in the corresponding category. This simple calculation determines the average (mean) numbers for each of the six categories. Likewise an overall average (grand mean) is achieved by adding up the ratings of all the statements and dividing the total number by 50." (Amerstorfer, 2018, p. 501). The language learner SILL profile, hence, demonstrates three outcomes: an average mean for each of the six categories, an overall grand mean of strategy use, a personal self-evaluation for each strategy statement. The average numbers generated are interpreted in correspondence to a key, Table 3, to determine high, medium, and low frequency of LLS use.

Table 3: Oxford LLS Frequency of use mean interpretation

High	Always or almost always used	4.5 to 5.0
	Usually used	3.5 to 4.4
Medium	Sometimes used	2.5 to 3.4
Low	Generally not used	1.5 to 2.4
	Never or almost never used	1.0 to 1.4

The SPSS version 29.0 was also utilized for descriptive statistics (Mean and standard deviation), and to obtain the most to least used strategy type by participants and which of which showed the least cluster/ spread out around the mean. The qualitative data collected will be analyzed in the discussion section with respect to the quantitative data. Themes, pattern relationships will be drawn and identified.

4. Results and findings

RQ: *What is the level of the self-reported strategic awareness Moroccan baccalaureate students show?*

The findings related to the self-reported strategy use for each category is demonstrated in the Table 4 below. Metacognitive strategies (M=3.80, SD= .641) with the highest mean and lowest standard deviation value, and affective strategies (M=2.654, SD= .984) with the lowest mean and highest standard deviation. The overall average for strategy use for the class, as a whole, trails the following ranking, then: Metacognitive strategies, social strategies, compensational strategies, cognitive strategies, memory strategies, and affective strategies.

Table 4: Descriptive Statistics of the frequency of LLS use for each strategy type

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Part A: Memory	25	2.8340	.56857
Part B: Cognitive	25	2.9524	.73703
Part C: Compensation	25	3.0768	.74857
Part D: Metacognitive	25	3.8000	.64120
Part E: Affective	25	2.6544	.98498
Part F: Social	25	3.5280	.75920
Valid N (listwise)	25		

Appropriately, the overall strategy use average or grand mean for each participant, which is shown in detail alongside the ranking is in Table 5, with participant 24 scoring the highest grand mean (M=3.96) and participant 23 the lowest (M=1.98). Only eight participants of the whole class were within the high to medium range as highlighted in grey in the table.

Table 5: Participants' overall LLS Frequency of use and rank

Participants	Grand mean	Rank
1	2.38	22
2	3.6	7
3	3.86	2
4	3.04	13
5	3.08	12
6	3.8	4
7	3	14
8	1.98	23
9	2.84	16
10	3.3	9
11	2.52	20
12	3.3	9
13	2.44	21
14	3.18	10
15	3.72	5
16	2.76	19
17	3.44	8
18	2.78	18
19	3.62	6
20	2.88	15
21	3.84	3

22	3.12	11
23	3.18	10
24	3.96	1
25	2.82	17

RQ: Do Moroccan baccalaureate students vary in the type of LLS they report to use?

Table 6 provides a detailed display for each participant and each LLS type, showcasing a personal self-reported strategic awareness/use and preference, if we may to say. The most used strategy is highlighted for each participant for later interpretation in the discussion phase.

Table 6: Participants' frequency of use for each LLS type

Participant	Part A Mean	Part B Mean	Part C Mean	Part D Mean	Part E Mean	Part F Mean
1	2.30	2.70	1.50	3.40	1.00	2.30
2	3.22	3.85	2.83	4.11	2.83	4.33
3	3.55	4.21	3.50	4.22	3.33	3.83
4	2.88	3.07	2.83	4.11	1.60	3.16
5	2.88	2.78	3.00	3.88	1.83	4.16
6	4.22	3.92	4.33	4.33	2.83	2.50
7	2.66	2.57	2.66	4.00	3.00	3.33
8	1.88	1.00	1.66	1.88	1.33	3.83
9	2.66	2.71	2.66	4.11	2.00	2.50
10	3.33	2.78	3.33	3.88	3.66	3.16
11	2.11	2.14	2.50	3.66	2.66	2.16
12	2.77	3.07	4.50	3.66	2.50	3.66
13	2.33	2.78	2.16	2.88	1.16	2.66
14	2.33	3.21	3.16	3.66	2.33	4.50
15	3.11	3.21	3.83	4.66	4.66	3.33
16	1.88	2.85	3.00	3.11	1.16	4.66
17	3.44	2.64	4.16	4.22	3.83	3.00
18	2.33	2.00	2.83	3.70	4.00	4.16
19	3.22	3.50	3.66	4.22	2.33	4.83
20	2.88	2.42	2.50	3.22	3.00	3.66
21	3.22	4.14	3.66	4.66	3.00	3.83
22	2.44	2.85	2.83	4.33	3.50	2.83
23	2.66	2.85	3.00	4.33	2.16	4.16
24	3.55	4.14	3.83	4.00	4.00	4.16
25	3.00	2.42	3.00	2.77	2.66	3.50

(Note: the participant numbers are but random digits assigned to organize the data, and they have no particular meaning)

To summarize, participant 2, 3, 6, 18, 21, and 24 scored the highest level of frequency of use of LLS according to SILL. Participant 4, 5, 7, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 16, 17, 18, 20, 22, 23, 25 scored a medium level, while participant 1, 8 scored the lowest level of LLS use frequency. From the data, some patterns seemed to emerge. The two lowest scoring participants had *cognitive strategies* as the least used, while it was the one used the most by the highest scoring participant (n 24). Medium level participants, too, used *affective strategies* and *cognitive strategies* the least, and high scoring subjects had *affective* followed by *memory strategies* the lowest in use. Nevertheless, students who reported high level of use of both cognitive and metacognitive strategies show a high score for the remaining categories as well.

Knowing that cognitive strategies are the vehicle that carry metacognitive tasks, it is peculiar to see that cognitive strategies were the least if not the main disregarded strategy type, by most participants. Metacognitive and cognitive strategies go hand in hand, and if there is one interpretation for this; it would be that students are unconsciously using metacognition. Another insight would be that metacognitive strategies are domain general; they help manage and support the language learning

process without directly involving the target language, and this high record of their use, by all three levels of students, might stem from their utility in other subject area, besides English. However, alone, they only help coordinate the learning process. Cognitive strategies, conversely, are directly related to the language being learnt, which might be overwhelming for learners. They require a decent amount of conscious effort and mental processing of the language being learnt. This resistance of cognitive strategies kind of explains the rationale behind *affective strategies* being the second most used type; affective strategies are responsible for the learners' emotions, motivation and attitudes (Amerstorfer, 2018), and for a learner to engage in cognitively driven actions, that should be supported with a lot of emotional and motivational drive, or somewhat a consistent sense of discipline. Habok et al (2022) elucidates that "self-regulated learners are thus capable of determining personal goals. They can then metacognitively monitor their cognitive processes while they complete them. They are able to interpret their achievement and modify their study strategies accordingly. After attaining their goals they can set new goals" (p.3). The findings are consistent with Ismail & Al Khatib, 2013; Abu Shmais, 2003; McMullen, 2009; Yang, 2010.

RQ: *Do elements observed in TTT match Moroccan bacculaureate students' LLS use? Are there any instances in TTT that seem to motivate the reported choice of LLS of Moroccan bacculaureate students?*

5. Teacher observation report

The topic of the two lessons observed was 'relative pronouns'. The aim of the observation was to induce any 'strategic talk' in TTT. Examples would be, besides explicit labelling of strategies or an actual strategy introduction, the teacher describing what is going in their mind, demonstrating the process of going about an activity, the presence of any group discussion or reflection time, or/ and the teacher prompting students to think critically through thoughtful questions. In reality, there was a lot of elicitation performed by the teacher, and walking students through answering: "What do we call these?"; "Do you think the meaning changes when we remove non-restrictive clauses?"; "what is this?"; "discuss with your friend?"; "squeeze your brain!". There was some demonstration of logic about how to take on the task; by telling students exactly how to approach the worksheet, where to look and the exact steps to follow. A pattern of Moroccan Arabic use was noticed when the teacher was the one to point whom to answer a question, but it was not tolerated, and the teacher expressed the importance of using the target language by straightforwardly asking them to. However, when the students volunteered to answer, they used English. In fact, students' English was pretty good but there was some hesitance at first till its use was expressed to be mandatory. Error correction was approached by asking for peer correction, and not labeling the response to be 'wrong'. The teacher also assisted students and walked them through the activity when in groups and seemed to fall behind.

Knowing that Oxford (1990) SILL reflects language learners' actual strategy application, and bearing in mind the quantitative results presented and discussed above, the English classroom seemed to positively reflect students' strategic awareness and use. It was observed that students' thinking process and autonomy was very much reliant on the teacher's next instruction. There was a lot of spoon feeding, and the teacher's role in itself was mainly that of monitoring students cognition, in lieu of monitoring their interaction and autonomy. These elements seem to explain the results generated. Oxford emphasized that the direct and indirect strategies to be intertwined and that they support each other despite their division into two main groups and six categories, but considering the previously described contradiction about metacognitive and cognitive strategies and that one of the main properties of metacognitive strategies is their conscious employment, the TTT seems to motivate students' strategic choice: the high reported use of metacognitive strategies by students across all three levels. However, this is like having a vehicle with no fuel. Cognitive claims/ items (I say or write new English words several times; I try to talk like native English speakers; I practice the sounds of English; I use the English words I know in different ways; I try to find patterns in English; I write notes, messages, letters, or reports in English...) go hand in hand with metacognitive decisions (I try to find out how to be a better learner of English; I think about my progress in learning English; I plan my schedule so I will have enough time to study English; I pay attention when someone is speaking English...).

6. Conclusion

This paper was centered on generating patterns in students' LLS use, following Oxford's six strategy categories, as well as exploring any instances of strategic representation in TTT. The findings displayed a continued scarcity, and an ongoing dominance of a one-way instruction prevailing TTT, even in 2024, although it is important to take into account the generalizability factor in considering the formed findings. Appropriately, this paper implied a still in-need for teachers to model the strategic awareness that students need to develop. The aim is to expose students early on in their language learning experience to a number of cognitive and metacognitive strategies. In fact, teaching and learning English should be done in the light of these practices, despite the packed curricula imposed by policy makers. LLS enable learners to confront problems and see themselves as the main agents of their learning process. More opportunities for reflection and self-assessment is required, as students will develop a sense of self-knowledge that can go beyond the language classroom.

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