English Language & Literature Teaching, Vol. 21, No. 2 Summer 2015

A Study on English Language Learning Strategy Use by University Students in Korea

Gina Kim[*]
(Hoseo University)
David Hutchinson[**]
(Hoseo University)
Eric Hall
(Hoseo University)

Kim, Gina, Hutchinson, David & Hall, Eric (2015). A study on English language learning strategy use by university students in Korea. *English Language & Literature Teaching, 21*(2), 41-63.

This study examines language learning strategy use among students at a university in Korea using a new questionnaire to fit the EFL setting. A questionnaire was formed and administered to 2560 students concerning strategy use and English language self-evaluation. The data about the students' proficiency of English were also collected. The relationship between strategy use and proficiency among Korean university students was discussed as well as learners' self-evaluation of their English ability and strategy use. Exploratory factor analysis was applied to the questionnaire responses. Students' proficiency was measured in three ways: TOEIC scores, PEC (course) grades and self-evaluation rating. Results of the TOEIC score analysis showed the high-level subjects used strategies more than the intermediate ones, who used strategies more than the low band subjects. One exception was the "passive/avoidance" strategies, which the low band subjects used the most. PEC grade analysis showed those with higher grades used more active strategies while those with lower grades used more passive strategies. Self-evaluation analysis concluded that the high band used the first four strategy types more than the intermediate band, which used the strategies more than the low band. Further results and implications are discussed at the conclusion of the paper.

[language learning strategies/Korea/university/self-evaluation/language strategy use/proficiency]

[*]First author
[**]Corresponding author

I. INTRODUCTION

As English teachers and researchers we often wonder why some students are better learners and/or achievers than others. Especially when students feel the need to improve their English abilities in an EFL situation where language input is relatively rare, we try to look for clues to guide them. Language learning strategies are "operations employed by the learner to aid the acquisition, storage, retrieval and use of information, specific actions taken by the learner to make learning easier, faster, more enjoyable, more self-directed, more effective and more transferable to new situations" (Oxford, 2001 p.166). Therefore, strategy use is a good place to explore for new ways to help learners improve their efficiency in learning languages. If the strategies used most by proficient learners are identified, then the effectiveness of teaching these strategies can be further investigated.

A number of studies have investigated strategy use by learners. Just a small selection of these include Akbari & Hosseini (2008), Cabansag (2013), Chamot, O'Malley, Kupper & Impink-Hernandez (1987), Oxford & Burry-Stock (1995), Peacock & Ho (2003) and Tiono & Sylvia (2004). Several studies have compared the strategy use of more proficient learners with less proficient learners in the hopes of uncovering strategy patterns of better language learners (Green & Oxford, 1995; Griffiths, 2003; Huang & Van Naerssen, 1987; Oxford & Nyikos, 1989; Wong & Nunan, 2011). One very common way of measuring strategy use has been the Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL) designed by Oxford (1986), a questionnaire that has been administered to at least 10,000 learners (Oxford, 2011). The SILL distinguishes 6 types of strategies, including memory, cognitive, compensation, meta-cognitive, affective, and social strategies.

The SILL is a high-quality instrument that was systematically designed and refined, and has proven very useful, but the fact that it has been used by so many studies leads to the danger that research on strategy use becomes overly biased towards the categories and strategies that it includes. This study attempts to look at strategy use from a different angle through the design of a new questionnaire for an exploratory investigation of strategy use by learners. Most of the studies that have focused on language learner strategy use have relied on the SILL, but this is designed to cover a very broad range of strategies used in a general language-learning context. As such, it does not examine in depth the strategies most relevant to the situation that this study aims to address, namely university students taking a communicative English course. The questionnaire was designed to focus on strategy use in communicative settings.

The questionnaire in this study was designed without pre-conceived ideas of how the strategies should be grouped. Therefore, an exploratory factor analysis is used to discover factors that can be used to group the strategies. This study aims to use the results of the

questionnaire to investigate the relationship between strategy use by university students and their proficiency level. It is not easy to gain a broad measure of proficiency, so 3 different measures of proficiency were used: TOEIC scores, grades in an English communication course, and self-evaluations.

Research questions for this study are as follows:

1. What language-learning strategies do Korean university learners use most when studying English (with an emphasis on strategies relevant to spoken English communication) and how can they be categorized?
2. What is the relationship between proficiency and use of language learning strategies?
3. What is the relationship between learners' self-evaluation of their ability and feelings and their use of language learning strategies?

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

1. Language Learning Strategies

In recent years, language learning strategies have seen a variety of different definitions as well as classification systems. Cohen, Weaver and Li (1996) define language learning strategies as "steps or actions selected by learners to improve the learning of a foreign language, the use of a foreign language, or both" (1996, p. 3). Scarcella and Oxford (1992) state that strategies are "specific actions, behaviors, steps, or techniques − such as seeking out conversation partners, or giving oneself encouragement to tackle a difficult language task − used by students to enhance their own learning" (1992, p. 63).

Language learning strategies have been around for as long as man has been trying to learn language. However, the modern day emphasis on learning strategies began about 40 years ago with two foundational articles. Rubin (1975) and Stern (1975) began the scholarly trend of investigating strategies by publishing articles aimed at good language learners. "What the 'good language learner' can teach us" (Rubin, 1975) looked at how the good language learner excels where others struggle. It was an initial attempt to locate and describe strategies that good language learners use in acquiring a second language. Similarly, Stern (1975) looked at good language learners and how they approach learning a new language.

Since the publication of these two articles, volumes have been written concerning second and foreign language learning strategies and their use among language learners. The study of language learning strategies has also increased in popularity among the international research community. Countries such as Iran (Khosravi, 2012; Mohammadi,

Biria, Koosha, & Shahsavari, 2013; Reza, Yaser, & Ayub, 2012; Sadeghi & Khonbi, 2013), Vietnam (Dang, 2013; Nhan & Lai, 2012), Japan (Liyanage, Grimbeek, & Bryer, 2010; Rose & Harbon, 2013; Yabukoshi & Takeuchi, 2006, 2009), China (Feng, 2010; Jiangkui & Yuanxing, 2011; Zhang, 2012; Zhou, 2010) and Korea (Jun, 2012; S. Kang, 2012; Y. Kang & Pyun, 2013; Liu & Park, 2012; G. Park, 2011; S. Park, 2013) are now at the forefront of some of today's most interesting and descriptive studies concerning language learning strategies and their effectiveness.

As far as taxonomies, Oxford (1990) preferred to use a classification system for strategies because of an apparent lack of hierarchy among different strategies. Oxford's classification system is the most widely used standard in language learning strategy research. She divides strategies into two classes (direct and indirect) and six groups (memory, cognitive, compensation, meta-cognitive, affective, and social) (Oxford, 1990). These classifications allow the researcher to determine specific areas to look at concerning students of all levels. Other systems of classification include O'Malley & Chamot (1990) and Oxford's S^2R model of language learning in which "learners actively and constructively use strategies to manage their own learning" (Oxford, 2011, p. 7).

2. Measuring Strategy Use

Many studies have attempted to measure strategy use by different types of learners in various contexts. Often, the purpose of such research is to determine what type of strategies good language learners use more. Another key focus of these studies is comparing strategy use between different groups, such as different genders or different majors.

There are different ways to measure strategy use. Some studies have included observation of strategy use during a task (Littlemore, 2003; Tiono & Sylvia, 2004) or stimulated recall of strategy use during a task (Khan & Victori, 2011). This is similar to think-aloud protocols, which have been used to determine students' strategy use in reading tasks (Chin, 2009; Jiménez, García, & Pearson, 1996). However, such research focuses on strategy use within a narrow context as defined by the task. Other research has included interviews of participants (Huang & Van Naerssen, 1987; Li & Qin, 2006; Peacock & Ho, 2003). Since interviews can be time-consuming and impractical for large numbers of participants, many studies have made use of questionnaires. Questionnaires have the advantage of covering a broad range of strategy types. They are also easily administered to large numbers, making quantitative analysis possible.

Various questionnaires have been used, the most well-known being the SILL designed by Oxford (1986). The original version of the SILL contained 121 questions covering reading, writing, listening and speaking. These questions contained strategies classified

into the 6 groups in Oxford's taxonomy mentioned above. Later, 80 and 50 question versions were designed and thoroughly tested. The SILL has been found to be reliable across many populations (Green & Oxford, 1995; Oxford & Burry-Stock, 1995). Oxford & Nyikos (1989) also demonstrated the content, concurrent and construct validity of the test.

Although the SILL has been widely used, some have noted some weaknesses with the SILL. Nakatani (2006) points out that it contains mostly general statements, not specific to actual tasks, and is somewhat lacking in language use strategies. Gao (2004, p. 7) states that "many items in the SILL may not be appropriate for particular EFL contexts. Furthermore, relying on a single questionnaire for the majority of research can "distort the complexity of individual learners' realities across various learning contexts" (Gao, 2004, p.4).

Therefore, some studies have opted to use different questionnaires, often developing them for the study. Chamot, O' Malley, Kupper & Impink-Hernandez (1987) introduced the Learning Strategies Inventory (LSI) with a total of 48 questions covering 8 cognitive, 6 metacognitive and 2 social affective strategies. Nakatani (2006) developed the Oral Communication Strategy Inventory (OCSI). This inventory was more specific than others, focusing on just oral communication strategies. Questionnaires have also been used to investigate the relationship between strategy use and many variables, including motivation (Feng, 2010), anxiety (Mohammadi, Biria, Koosha & Shahsavari, 2013), attitude (Cabansag, 2013), age (Peacock & Ho, 2003), personality (Li & Qin, 2006), Multiple Intelligences (Akbari & Hosseini, 2008), gender (Oxford & Nyikos, 1989; Ehrman & Oxford, 1989; Green & Oxford, 1995) and major (Peacock & Ho, 2003).

3. Proficiency and Learner Strategies

In addition to the variables mentioned in the previous section, the proficiency of the learners has been of particular interest. Many studies have attempted to discover the difference between high and low level learners, and especially what kinds of strategies are used more by stronger learners.

Different studies have measured proficiency in varying ways, including course level (Griffiths, 2003; Green & Oxford, 1995), tests (Huang & Van Naerssen, 1987; Wong & Nunan, 2011), self-ratings (Oxford & Nyikos, 1989) and grades (Mullins, 1992, cited in Green & Oxford, 1995). Many studies have shown positive relationships between proficiency or level and strategy use. Both Green & Oxford (1995) and Griffiths (2003) found that students in a higher course level used more strategies than other students. In Oxford & Nyikos (1989), subjects rated their speaking, reading and listening abilities. All 3 ratings were found to positively influence some types of strategy. Likewise, in a Taiwanese study of over 3,000 upper primary school students, high proficiency students

used a wide range of strategies related to "comprehension, organization and elaboration." (Griffiths et al., 2014, p. 51). Furthermore, according to a study by Choi & Chang (2013), university students' metacognitive awareness in confidence as a reader, effective reading strategies, and problem solving strategies in perceived reading strategy use were significantly related to their reading proficiency. It was reported that the higher level readers showed more confidence when reading and tended to be top-down in their perceptions of effective reading strategies whereas lower level readers struggled more with reading difficulties implying that teachers should provide opportunities to raise metacognitive awareness of their reading and reading strategies in order to help the learners become more responsible, strategic and efficient readers.

"The relationship between the strategy used by the language learners and their proficiency level is positive, i.e. there is a direct association between them. The more proficient the learners are, the greater number of strategies they apply." (Gharbavi & Mousavi, 2012, p. 120) In summary, there is ample evidence for a positive relationship between proficiency and strategy use found in multiple studies. However, it is the interpretation and implications of these results that often leads to confusion in the area of proficiency and strategy use.

Another aspect worth considering is the difference between a "good language learner" and a high-proficiency learner. If the high-level students have simply spent more time studying the language, it is hard to interpret the strategies they use as better than those used by the students who have spent less time studying. As Griffiths & Oxford (2014, p. 2) write, "Research over the years has shown that the relationship between strategies and proficiency is not uncomplicated."

Also, even if certain strategies are used more by high-level learners, this doesn't imply that the strategies were responsible for their higher level. In fact, some strategies may become more available at higher levels. If so, the students' high level may be responsible for the high strategy use, rather than the other way around. On the other hand, Griffiths (2003, p.381) talks about the "tornado effect", in which "effective strategies might help students to develop higher levels of language proficiency, which in turn might lead to the use of higher level strategies and so on with one continuously augmenting the other". If this is the case, it is difficult to determine at which point this "tornado effect" actually begins. In any case, because of these various cause-and-effect relationships, one needs to be careful in interpreting the relationship between language proficiency and strategy use. That is, higher strategy use by more proficient learners doesn't imply that teaching strategies leads to greater proficiency, although it remains a key area of investigation.

III. RESEARCH DESIGN

1. Participants

Subjects were first year students at a university in the central region of South Korea. All freshmen attending this university are required to take 2 semesters of both *English listening&TOEIC* (LC part) taught by Korean-bilingual professors and *Practical English Communication* (PEC). PEC is taught by native professors of English, exclusively or almost exclusively in English. PEC focuses on spoken communication, although professors are free to include other components such as grammar or reading.

A questionnaire (described in the next section) was administered to freshmen students at the beginning of *English listening&TOEIC* class in the second semester. It was given during this class so that the Korean instructors could explain the questionnaire properly in Korean so the students would understand completely.

There were originally 2560 subjects who filled out the questionnaire. After excluding non-first-year students, those who didn't completely fill out the strategy section of the questionnaire, and students with significant experience living abroad, there were 2299 subjects left. These subjects included 1153 males, 1014 females and 132 subjects who did not identify their gender. They belonged to one of 6 colleges: Social Science (481), Humanities (293), Natural Sciences (286), Engineering (597), IT Engineering (294) and Arts & Sports (346). Two subjects did not report their college.

2. Instrument Design

A 3-part questionnaire was designed to investigate the use of strategies by learners. The 3 sections of the questionnaire included general information, self-evaluation and strategy use. The first section included general information including the subjects' gender, college, *Practical English Communication* (PEC) and *English listening&TOEIC* course grades from the previous term, TOEIC score and overseas experience. The second section included statements in which the subjects can evaluate themselves based on their English ability and feelings about language learning. These included "I am good at English", "I can speak English well", "I feel anxious when using English" and "Speaking English is fun and exciting". The third section included 35 language learning strategies.

The strategy section focused on strategies relevant to spoken English communication, especially those that would be taken by learners taking an English communication course, although a few other strategies for outside the classroom activities were added for balance. A focus on communication strategies was adopted because of the challenge that PEC presents for many students, who are not used to learning in a communicative environment,

and may be struggling to cope with it.

To select strategies for the third section, a list of strategies was compiled based on what has been observed in class, what students have said they use and by looking at existing surveys and questionnaires, in particular the SILL. This list of strategies was then reduced to those most relevant to speaking/communication. The strategies are given in Appendix 1.

The self-evaluation and strategies sections used a 5-point Likert scale, with 1 labeled "not at all true" and 5 labeled "very true". The questionnaire was translated into Korean for distribution.

The data from the questionnaires was entered into SPSS for factorization and analysis.

3. Exploratory Factor Analysis and Interpretation

After the questionnaires were administered, the data from the questionnaires were entered into SPSS for factorization and analysis. Exploratory factor analysis was applied to the responses in section 3, that is, to the 35 strategies. Principal Component Analysis was used with Varimax Rotation. Five factors were extracted after 7 iterations. Cronbach's alpha was 0.914. Three of the strategies (3, 19 and 32) were excluded because they had factor loadings below 0.4, and 1 strategy (2) was excluded because its factor loading with Factor 4 was very close to 0.4 and did not fit the interpretation given to this factor. Strategy 26 could belong to Factor 1 (factor loading of 0.436) or Factor 4 (0.424). It was placed into Factor 4 because it fit into the interpretation for Factor 4 much better. The results of the factorization can be seen in Appendix 1.

Factor 1 included many strategies that involve getting help or support for speaking or other tasks. The nature of the support varies, including dictionaries (strategy 28), body language (strategy 27), and friends (20, 21 and 33). Therefore, this factor was labeled "actively finds support".

Factor 2 was rather straightforward, including many planning and other metacognitive strategies, so this factor is labeled "metacognitive".

Factor 3 was much more ambiguous, and there was some trouble identifying a common thread. One researcher felt that many of them included a "desire to be well-prepared", with strategies like "I rehearse in my head before speaking in English" and "I try to understand all the words spoken by the professor". However, the strategies that fit this description tended to be those with lower factor loadings, and not all fit it well. All of the strategies do involve some kind of self-regulation, and are cognitive, so the label "self-regulation / cognitive" was decided upon.

Factor 4 includes strategies that involve actively participating or using the language, especially speaking. Thus, this factor is labeled "Active participation".

Factor 5 is quite the opposite – it involves strategies that are passive, or avoid using

English (strategy 10: "I don't say anything when I can't think of an appropriate expression"; strategy 30: "When asked in English I give a quick short answer"). This factor was labeled "passive / avoidance".

This study aims to look at the link between proficiency in English and strategy use. For the investigation, proficiency was measured in 3 ways: the subjects' TOEIC score, their PEC grade, and their self-evaluation. The next section examines the results of this investigation.

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

1. Relationship between TOEIC scores and Strategy Use

To investigate the links between TOEIC scores and strategy use, scores were taken from an unofficial mock TOEIC exam that students take before they begin first year. Since a few of the students did not take the test, they were excluded from this part of the analysis. This resulted in 2297 subjects remaining for the analysis, for which an ANOVA was used.

Three levels of TOEIC scores were used: high, intermediate and low. To ensure that each level was substantially different, the bands were chosen from just the top, bottom and median 5% of scores. The lowest band consisted of the lowest 5%, excluding scores lower than 200 (it was suspected that some of these scores could have been a result of random guessing, as the test is not high stakes for the students). This band contained 125 subjects, with scores ranging between 208 and 257. The high band consisted of the top 5% of scores, with a range of 584-772 – a total of 112 subjects. The intermediate band was made up of all of those with the median score of 376. There were 103 subjects in this band. An ANOVA was carried out with 2 independent variables: the TOEIC score (in 3 bands) and the 5 strategy factors. The results of the ANOVA are found in Table 1.

TABLE 1

Strategy Use and TOEIC Scores(ANOVA)

Factors	High (n=112)	Intermediate (n=103)	Low (n=125)	F	D
1	3.46(.71)	3.44(.74)	2.96(.82)	16.850***	high, intermediate.>low
2	2.94(.73)	2.39(.68)	2.16(.76)	34.972***	high> intermediate.>low
3	3.65(.67)	3.12(.71)	2.67(.79)	53.543***	high> intermediate.>low
4	3.27(.74)	2.60(.69)	2.33(.75)	51.557***	high> intermediate.>low
5	2.46(.64)	2.88(.72)	2.95(.72)	16.698***	low, intermediate> high

*p<.05, **p<.01, ***p<.001, D. Duncan

As can be seen in Table 1, strategy use amongst subjects in the low band and those in the intermediate band is similar, with one clear exception. They both use "actively finds support" strategies most, and both use metacognitive strategies least, followed by "active participation" strategies. Where they differ is that the low band subjects use "passive / avoidance" strategies second and "self-regulation / cognitive" strategies third whereas the intermediate band subjects used the "self-regulation / cognitive" strategies second and "passive / avoidance" strategies third.

Strategy use by the high band is quite different, with "self-regulation / cognitive" used most, followed by "actively finds support", then "active participation" followed by metacognitive strategies. "Passive / avoidance" strategies were used least by the high band subjects.

Post hoc analysis was carried out using Duncan's new multiple range test to compare strategy use between the three bands. The results of this analysis can be seen in Table 1. The results show that, for the most part, the high-level subjects used strategies more than the intermediate ones, who in turn used strategies more than the low band subjects. The exception is, unsurprisingly, the "passive / avoidance" strategies, which were used most by the low band subjects. Also, there was no significant difference found between the high and intermediate bands for the "actively finds support" strategies. It may be that the better learners do not need support as much, and so they do not seek it; however, those most in need of support, the low band, actually use these strategies the least. This may be because they are not engaged in their studies, or they do not know how to find support.

2. Relationship between *PEC* Grades and Strategy Use

The next part of the analysis investigated the link between strategy use and subjects' grade in the *Practical English Communication* course. This was done to complement the use of TOEIC scores, to provide two separate measures of proficiency. The course is communication-focused, so the grades reflect their ability and effort in a communicative classroom setting, which may be quite different from the abilities revealed by the TOEIC scores.

However, some limitations of the grades need to be taken into account. First, since grades were given by different instructors, there is no single standard that the grades measured. Second, grading policy restricts the number of A/A+ grades as well as B/B+ grades. Therefore, subjects with grades of B+ may in fact have deserved an A or A+, and those with C+ grades may have deserved a B or higher. For this reason, grades of B+, B and C were not used. Instead, just two bands were created: those with a grade of A+ were placed in the high group, and those with grades of C, D+ or D were placed in the low group. Grades of F were excluded because many of these grades were given for students

who dropped the class for personal reasons. Grades of A were not used in order to keep the two groups of a similar size. The high group (A+ grades) consisted of 267 subjects, and the low group (C, D+ and D grades) had 343 subjects.

TABLE 2

Strategy Use and Practical English Communication grades (t-test)

Factor	PEC Grade	mean	SD	t
1	High	3.58	.53	7.863***
	Low	3.16	.82	
2	High	2.69	.63	7.434***
	Low	2.27	.75	
3	High	3.45	.56	9.978***
	Low	2.92	.76	
4	High	3.04	.68	10.401***
	Low	2.44	.73	
5	High	2.59	.65	-5.097***
	Low	2.89	.79	

n=267(High),n=343(Low), ***p<.001

T-tests were carried out between the high and low groups for each of the 5 strategy types. The results are in Table 2. As the table shows, the high group used more strategies than the low group ($p<0.001$) for the first four strategy types (actively finds support, metacognitive, self-regulation/cognitive and active participation), whereas the low group used more of the passive/avoidance strategies. This is consistent with the analysis of TOEIC scores and strategy use in the previous section. Therefore, this study is consistent with previous studies in finding that greater strategy use is related to higher levels of language proficiency (O'Malley & Chamot, 1990; Cohen, 1997).

3. Relation between Self-Evaluation and Strategy Use

The final part of the analysis investigates subjects' self-evaluation. In the self-evaluation section of the questionnaire, subjects evaluated themselves on ten statements about their ability or feelings towards English. For this study, four of the statements were examined further: "I am good at English", "I can speak English well", "I feel anxious when using English" and "Speaking English is fun and exciting".

TABLE 3

Strategy Use and responses to "I am good at English" (ANOVA)

Factor	High(n=96)	Mid(n=728)	Low(n=1472)	F	S
1	3.50(.67)	3.49(.57)	3.30(.77)	17.338***	High,Mid>Low
2	2.96(.72)	2.78(.60)	2.30(.67)	162.255***	High>Mid>Low
3	3.72(.56)	3.46(.53)	2.97(.71)	171.065***	High>Mid>Low
4	3.44(.74)	3.99(.60)	2.47(.67)	223.291***	High>Mid>Low
5	2.30(.59)	2.70(.62)	2.94(.74)	58.870***	Low>Mid>High

*p<.05, **p<.01, ***p<.001, S. Scheffe

For each question, students gave a response between 1 ("not at all true") and 5 ("very true"). Subjects' answers to these questions were grouped into 3 bands for analysis: answers of 4 or 5 were combined into one band, and answers of 1 or 2 were also combined into a single band. Responses of 4 or 5 were labeled "high", and responses of 1 or 2 were labeled "low", while responses of 3 were labeled "mid" (except for the third statement "I feel anxious when using English"; these were reversed, so that "high" included responses of 1 or 2, i.e. low anxiety, and "low" included responses of 4 or 5, i.e. high anxiety). Thus, for each question, "high" represents a positive self-evaluation; either a belief that the subject has a good ability in English, or low anxiety, or a positive attitude. On the other hand, "low" represents a corresponding negative self-evaluation.

An ANOVA was used to look at the relationship between their responses to these questions and their reported strategy use. The results of the ANOVA are in Tables 3-6. Following this, post hoc tests revealed which bands used each strategy more. Scheffé's method was used for three of the questions, but this method failed to find significant differences for the statement "I can speak English well", so the more liberal Duncan's method was used for this question. The results of the post hoc tests can be found in the columns marked "S" or "D" in Tables 3-6.

TABLE 4

Strategy Use and responses to "I can speak English well" (ANOVA)

Factor	High(n=206)	Mid(n=695)	Low(n=1391)	F	D
1	3.44(.70)	3.45(.63)	3.33(.75)	17.338**	High,Mid>Low
2	2.67(.77)	2.71(.64)	2.33(.68)	162.255***	High>Mid>Low
3	3.46(.69)	3.35(.60)	3.01(.72)	171.065***	High>Mid>Low
4	3.21(.76)	2.92(.62)	2.47(.67)	223.291***	High>Mid>Low
5	2.46(.68)	2.70(.64)	2.97(.72)	58.870***	Low>Mid>High

*p<.05, **p<.01, ***p<.001, D. Duncan

TABLE 5

Strategy Use and responses to "I feel anxious when using English" (ANOVA)

Factor	High(n=658)	Mid(n=803)	Low(n=828)	F	S
1	3.28(.81)	3.40(.64)	3.43(.70)	8.149***	Low>Mid,High
2	2.47(.78)	2.61(.64)	2.34(.65)	31.491***	Mid>High>Low
3	3.19(.82)	3.24(.58)	3.05(.70)	16.572***	High,Mid>Low
4	2.80(.83)	2.81(.61)	2.44(.65)	71.366***	High,Mid>Low
5	2.52(.73)	2.81(.60)	3.12(.69)	147.479***	Low>Mid>High

*p<.05, **p<.01, ***p<.001, S. Scheffe

In most cases, the "high" band used the first four strategy types more than the intermediate band, which used the strategies more than the low band. The reverse is true for the "passive / avoidance" strategies, which were used most by the low bands. The statements "I am good at English", "I can speak English well" and "Speaking English is fun and exciting" were quite consistent, but some other interesting patterns were revealed when looking at the statement "I feel anxious when using English". Those who reported the most anxiety (the low band) used "actively finds support" strategies more than the other two bands, and the intermediate band used the metacognitive strategies the most. It is uncertain why these were different than the general patterns found elsewhere, but it may be that there are many higher level language learners who nevertheless experience a lot of anxiety. It might also be that those who are anxious are more likely to look for support, although it is impossible to establish a causative relationship from these data.

TABLE 6

Strategy Use and responses to "Speaking English is fun and exciting" (ANOVA)

Factor	High(n=349)	Mid(n=888)	Low(n=1049)	F	S
1	3.58(.67)	3.40(.62)	3.28(.78)	24.304***	High>Mid>Low
2	2.78(.75)	2.61(.63)	2.25(.66)	115.075***	High>Mid>Low
3	3.58(.69)	3.26(.58)	2.93(.72)	143.171***	High>Mid>Low
4	3.26(.75)	2.80(.58)	2.37(.64)	289.678***	High>Mid>Low
5	2.46(.72)	2.82(.61)	2.98(.74)	72.630***	Low>Mid>High

*p<.05, **p<.01, ***p<.001, S. Scheffe

V. CONCLUSION

Even after almost 40 years of research, language learning strategies still garner multiple studies each year. For the most part, previous studies look at strategies via questionnaires covering various categories such as grade level, proficiency, self-evaluation or test-taking ability. This study aimed to look at the relationship between strategy use by Korean university freshmen with the results of a custom-made questionnaire and their proficiency level via the three categories of TOEIC scores, *PEC* grades and self-evaluation rating. Whereas previous research has examined general strategy use (often using Oxford's SILL questionnaire) or looked at strategies related to reading, this study focused on strategies used in the context of a communication-focused class.

In the study a new questionnaire was constructed, that focused on strategies used for communication, but included some study strategies for balance. By constructing a new questionnaire, this study was able to focus on the strategies most relevant to the communication-focused course that the subjects are enrolled in. As many university learners are unfamiliar with communication-focused courses, they may not be familiar with the strategies that are relevant for such a course. Therefore the questionnaire was made to address these strategies.

Exploratory factor analysis revealed a categorization of strategies that was somewhat different than existing strategy inventories, including factors labeled "actively finds support", "metacognitive", "self-regulation / cognitive", "active participation" and "passive / avoidance" strategies. The appearance of some of these may be a result of the communicative emphasis of the strategies surveyed, especially the "actively finds support", "active participation" and "passive / avoidance" strategy types. These strategies may play an important part in how learners adjust to the communicative classroom or other communicative situations, but further research is necessary here. Also, the fact that categories emerged that diverge from those found by Oxford suggests the value in using original questionnaires.

The first research question asked what kind of strategies are used most. The above analysis revealed that the "actively finds support" and "self-regulation / cognitive" strategies were among the most used, by all levels of learners, while metacognitive strategies were used least by most learners. One type of strategy that varied a lot between different levels was the "passive / avoidance" strategy type, which were among the most used strategies by the low-level learners, but the least among the high-level learners.

Previous research has often neglected these type of strategies, perhaps preferring to see them as 'non-strategies' in order to prefer the notion of strategies as positive. But it is important to recognize that all learners are indeed engaging in strategies, even if they aren't the same as those used by more proficient learners. And although some of the strategies in

the "passive / avoidance" type seem contrary to the goals of learning English (e.g. "I don't say anything when I can't think of an appropriate expression"), others may in fact be a necessary tool for those without advanced communication ability (e.g. "I speak in Korean if I can't think of a suitable English expression").

The second research question was concerned with the relationship between strategy use and proficiency. The results are similar to other previous studies in that higher-level students chose more strategies than lower level students. The higher-level students also chose more active strategies than the lower level students who favored passive strategies.

The third research question asked what the relationship is between strategy use and learners' self-evaluation of their ability and feelings. The learners' self-evaluation of their ability followed similar patterns to the other measures of proficiency. Likewise, their feeling of "fun" in English followed a similar pattern – those who said English is fun used more of the first four types of strategies and less of the passive strategies. However, the strategies labeled "actively finds support" were used most by the most anxious learners, and least by the least anxious ones.

Previous research with similar conclusions often suggest the teaching of strategies to lower-level students so that they may benefit from them in the same way more advanced students do. However, this leads to the question of which strategies should be taught. This research suggests the following pedagogical implications.

1. Strategies belonging to the "actively seeks support" group may be valuable for lower-level learners. Unlike many other strategy types, there was often no significant difference found between the higher and intermediate learners, but both groups used these strategies more than the lower learners. This is true for the analysis of TOEIC scores and responses to the statements "I am good at English" and "I can speak English well". These strategies may be very important to help students cope, and may be very beneficial for low-level learners, but they do not use them. Teaching lower-level students to use these strategies may be an important component in helping them reach the next level.
2. Although the intermediate level students seem to use "actively seeks support" strategies as much as advanced learners, they use metacognitive, self-regulation and active participation strategies less than the high-level learners. It may be beneficial to teach these strategies to intermediate-level learners.
3. Emphasis may be given to "self-regulation/cognitive" strategies and "actively finds support" in a TOEIC class although helping and guiding the students to use language learning strategies may lead in improvement in general.

However, there are some limitations to this study. First, it should be repeated that this research was exploratory in nature. The exploratory factor analysis revealed 5 factors, but

these should be verified through confirmatory factor analysis. Second, proficiency was triangulated with 3 measures of proficiency, but none of these directly measured communicative proficiency. Class grades are affected by many factors besides communicative proficiency, self-assessments are often unreliable, and the TOEIC scores, though more reliable, measure general proficiency. A speaking test measuring actual communicative proficiency would be ideal. Third, it is impossible to establish a causal relation between proficiency and strategy use, in either direction. We cannot assume that greater strategy use leads to greater proficiency, though that may be the case.

Implications derived from this study can lead to further studies that shed even more light on the ideas and phenomena of language learning strategies. Suggestions for further research are as follows:

1. Rather than using existing questionnaires that may not be suitable, new questionnaires could be developed for the context. Just as this study developed a questionnaire that focused on the communicative class environment that the subjects were in, future studies could design context-sensitive questionnaires adapted to the objectives of the study, as well as the type of course, grade level or culture.
2. Evidence is still needed demonstrating the effectiveness of teaching strategies to lower-level learners. This study revealed 4 broad types of strategies used more by more proficient learners. As mentioned earlier, teaching these strategies may benefit low-level and intermediate learners, but experimental research is needed. Further research could investigate each of these types of strategies to find out which types are most useful and most easily acquired by lower-level learners.
3. A comparative study of language strategy use among freshmen and senior students is suggested. Also, a look into the types of strategy use depending on the college or major of the student can be pursued.
4. A focus on mixed methods studies (quantitative and qualitative) such as using interviews along with questionnaires to better understand students' thoughts and beliefs when it comes to strategies and strategy use.

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APPENDIX A

Five Factors

Factor 1 Actively finds support

33	(PEC)* If I don't understand the question in English, I ask my friend.	0.686
28	When I can't think of an English expression I look it up in the	0.667
21	I ask for help from people (friends) who are good at English.	0.664
27	I use body language when I can't think of the right expression in	0.631
29	If the person I speak English to can't understand me, I repeat what I	0.626
23	Before I speak English, I think first in Korean and then translate into English.	0.533
20	I talk to others about the feelings and difficulties I have when I study English.	0.447

*PEC means "in Practical English Conversation class"

Factor 2 Metacognitive

15	I plan my time to give enough time to study English.	0.772
18	I often check how much my English ability has improved.	0.751
16	I preview the contents of the English lesson before it begins.	0.738

17	I have clear goals to improve my English ability.	0.727
14	I strive to find ways to improve my English.	0.497
31	I write down things before speaking in English.	0.469

Factor 3 Self-regulation (cognitive)

1	When I study English, I connect the new things I learn with things I already know.	0.619
6	When I read in English, I scan it first and then reread more carefully.	0.602
4	I speak or write new words many times.	0.584
9	I try to guess the meanings of new words I encounter.	0.544
13	I pay attention to the other person when he/she is speaking English.	0.469
25	I rehearse in my head before speaking in English.	0.466
35	(PEC) I try to understand all the words spoken by the professor.	0.464

Factor 4 Active participation

7	I often watch TV programs and movies in English.	0.644
8	I write simple memos, letters, or journals in English.	0.608
22	I strive to learn about the culture of English-speaking countries.	0.578
5	I try to become familiar with native speaker expressions outside of English class.	0.568
12	I try to find as many opportunities to use English without worrying about other people.	0.562
24	I try to use native-like intonation and pronunciation when I speak English.	0.425
26	Although I might make a mistake, I try to express what I want to in English.	0.424

Factor 5 Passive/Avoidance

10	I don’t say anything when I can’t think of an appropriate expression.	0.712
34	(PEC) I give up trying to understand when I can't understand the English question.	0.67
11	I speak in Korean if I can’t think of a suitable English expression.	0.657
30	When asked in English I give a quick short answer.	0.575

APPENDIX B

Questionnaire

매우그렇다-5 / 대체로그렇다-4 / 그저그렇다-3 / 대체로아니다 -2 / 전혀아니다 -1

	질문	5	4	3	2	1
1	영어 학습 시 이미 아는 것과 새로운 것을 관련지어 생각한다.					
2	새로운 단어를 기억하기 위해 단어가 사용된 문장 전체를 암기한다.					
3	단어를 기억하기 위해서 단어의 뜻을 행동으로 옮겨본다.					
4	새로운 단어를 여러 번 말해 보거나 써 본다.					
5	영어 수업 시간 외에 원어민이 사용하는 표현을 익히려 노력한다.					
6	영어로 된 글을 읽을 때 먼저 대충 훑고서 다시 자세히 살핀다.					
7	영어로 나오는 TV 프로그램이나 영화를 본다.					
8	간단한 쪽지나 편지 일기 등을 영어 써본다.					
9	모르는 영어 단어의 뜻을 이해하기 위해 추측해본다.					
10	영어로 적절한 표현이 떠오르지 않으면 아무 말도 하지 않는다.					
11	영어로 적절한 표현이 떠오르지 않으면 한국말로 한다.					
12	주위 시선을 의식 않고 영어 사용 기회를 가능한 많이 갖는다.					
13	다른 사람이 영어로 말하고 있을 때 주의를 기울인다.					
14	영어를 향상시킬 수 있는 방법을 찾으려고 애쓴다.					
15	영어를 공부할 시간이 충분하도록 시간계획을 세운다.					
16	다음 영어 수업시간에 배울 내용을 미리 예습 한다.					
17	영어 실력을 향상시키기 위한 뚜렷한 목적을 가지고 있다.					
18	나의 영어 실력이 얼마나 향상되었는지 자주 점검한다.					
19	내가 영어로 말하기 두려워질 때 마음을 편히 가지려 노력한다.					
20	영어 학습 시 느끼는 어려움, 느낌을 다른 사람과 이야기한다.					
21	나는 영어를 잘하는 사람에게 도움을 청한다.					
22	나는 영어권 나라의 문화에 대해 알려고 애쓴다.					
23	영어로 말하기 전에 우선 한국어로 말한 후 번역해서 말한다.					
24	영어로 말할 때 억양과 발음을 원어민처럼 하려 노력한다.					
25	영어로 말하기 전에 머리 속으로 먼저 연습해본다.					
26	실수를 하더라도 내가 표현하고 싶은 것은 영어로 하려고 노력한다.					
27	영어로 적절한 표현이 떠오르지 몸짓으로 한다.					
28	영어 표현이 떠오르지 않으면 사전(전자사전, 스마트폰)을 찾아본다.					
29	내가 영어로 말한 것을 상대방이 이해 못하면 다시 반복해서 말한다.					

30	영어를 말하는 것이 신나고 재미있다.					
31	영어를 말하기 전에 먼저 써본 후에 말을 한다.					
32	(PEC)영어 질문이 이해가 안되면 교수님에게 다시 질문한다.					
33	(PEC)영어 질문이 이해가 안되면 친구에게 물어본다.					
34	(PEC)영어 질문이 이해가 안되면 이해하기 포기한다.					
35	(PEC)교수님 말씀을 들을 때 모든 단어를 이해하려 노력한다.					

Examples in: English
Applicable Languages: English
Applicable Levels: College

Gina Kim
English Language and Literature Major
Hoseo University
12, Hoseodae-gil, Dongnam-gu
Cheonan, Korea
Email: ginakim@hoseo.edu

David Hutchinson
College of General Education
Hoseo University
20, Hoseo-ro, 79 Beon-gil, Baebang-eup,
Asan-si, Chungcheongnam-do, Korea
Email: hutchinson@hoseo.edu

Eric Hall
College of General Education
Hoseo University
20, Hoseo-ro, 79 Beon-gil, Baebang-eup,
Asan-si, Chungcheongnam-do, Korea
Email: erichall7@gmail.com

Received in April 15th, 2015
Reviewed in May 26th, 2015
Revised version received in June 5th, 2015