AN OVERVIEW OF LANGUAGE LEARNING STRATEGIES

CHIEN KUO LEE

Abstract

This paper aims to talk about the development of language learning strategy since the 1970s. It will provide information about of the use of language learning strategies, which will enhance English learning for non-native learners. Further, the better understanding of language learning strategies for English teachers can help students to learn more successfully and develop their learning autonomy. To this end, this paper can also serve as a research reference in the field of language learning strategies, particularly the relationship between a different language learning cultural background and the use of strategy as well as leading us to the current status of learning strategies and learning strategies instruction.

Keywords*: learning strategy, language learning strategy, understanding of language learning strategy, learning autonomy, language learning cultural background.*

Introduction

This paper focuses on previously published literature on language learning strategies. Many researchers and specialists have defined learning strategies in various ways; several definitions of this strategy are introduced first. Then, after introducing the concepts of learning strategy, I will address relevant studies and classification of this field by different researchers. Third, Rebecca Oxford (1990) will be specifically discussed because her Strategy Inventory for Language learning (SILL) is the most influential instrument in the area of language learning strategies and lays out the most exhaustive hierarchy of learning strategies to date (Rivera-Mills & Plonsky 2007). Next, the variable research affecting language learning strategies will be illustrated; theoretical background and current issues will be examined as well. Finally, the summary considers the main points that will be mentioned again in the end.

Learning Strategies

People do not understand everything when they are born, but have to learn everything so that they are able to understand. Take learning English for example; not everyone can understand it, but some non-native speakers can use the language very well. This is not only the case with English, but also other subjects. Therefore, during the learning process, one might find that some people can learn every subject or

several subjects very quickly and well. On the other hand, some people have problems

learning. Therefore, many researches try to find how learners go about learning

something, what makes learners successful at learning something, and why some

people are more effective at learning than others. As Williams & Burden (1997) point

out, that can only be answered by investigating learning strategies.

However, what exactly is meant by the term "learning strategy"? As Wenden

(1987a:7-8) says "Learning strategies are the various operations that learners use in

order to make sense of their learning". Also, Williams & Burden (1997) indicated that

when students are involved in a learning task, they have several resources which they

use in different ways to finish or solve the task, so this can be termed process of

learning strategy. This explanation might be too abstract to understand, so it may be

easier to say that learning strategy is learning skills, learning-to-learn skills, thinking

skills, problem skills or, in other words the methods which learners use to intake,

store, and retrieve during the learning process Oxford (1990) defines learning

strategies as "specific actions taken by the learner to make learning easier, faster, more

enjoyable, more self-directed, more effective, and more transferable to new situations"

(p.8). They do not only aid language learning, but also the learning of other subjects

such as maths, chemistry, etc. In other words, when learners start to learn something,

they have the ability to respond to the particular learning situation and to manage their learning in an appropriate way. Thus, learning strategy is like footballers who use tactics in order to win a game, when they are in the stadium. Learners use learning strategies in order to learn something more successfully.

We have already seen the concepts of learning strategy which, as mentioned previously, should be applied to all subjects. Therefore, over the last twenty years there has been an increasing amount of research into language learning strategies, in an attempt to discover which of the language learning strategies that students use are the most effective for the particular type of language learning involved. Next, the definitions of language learning strategies will be talked about in more detail.

Definitions of language learning strategies

Research into language learning strategies has increased significantly since the 1970s, because such categories play various important roles in language learning. Many researchers focus on how learners process new information and what kinds of strategies they use to understand, learn or remember the information in the area of second or foreign language learning. For instance, Naiman et al. (1978), Rubin (1975), and Stern (1975) pointed out that certain learners are more successful than others at learning a second or foreign language despite exposure to the same teaching methods

and learning environment. As we have already considered the concepts of learning strategy, the importance of understanding the definition of language learning strategy will be addressed below.

Many researchers and experts have defined language learning strategies from different points of view. According to Wenden (1987a), language learning strategies can be defined from the aspect of language learning behaviours, such as learning and regulating the meaning of a second or foreign language, cognitive theory, such as learners' strategic knowledge of language learning, and the affective view, such as learners' motivation, attitude, etc. It is argued that three points of views can improve language learning. O'Malley, Chamot and their colleagues (Chamot & O'Malley, 1987; O'Malley et al., 1985a) were devoted to studying the use of learning strategies by ESL learners in the US. Based on their research, language learning strategies were divided into three main categories, metacognitive, cognitive, and social affective which refer to learners' planning their learning, thinking about the learning process, monitoring their own comprehension or production, and evaluating the outcomes of their own learning. Next, Rigney (1978), and Rubin (1987), define language learning strategies as behaviours, steps, or techniques that language learners apply to facilitate language learning. Moreover, the definition by Oxford (1990) also included cognitive,

emotional, and social aspects of language learning strategies that enhance learners'

language learning proficiency and self-confidence (Oxford, 1990; Ehrman & Oxford,

1990).

Therefore, when language learners encounter language learning tasks such as

reading or writing, they can apply the several different strategies to complete the tasks.

Language learners will be successful in the tasks due to use of an appropriate language

learning strategy (Richard, 1994). Oxford (1990: 9) claims that language learning

strategies have the following features as shown in Figure 1.

Figure 1 FEATURES OF LANGUGE LEARNING STRATEGIES

Language learning strategies:

1. Contribute to the main goal, communicative competence.
2. Allow learners to become more self-directed.
3. Expand the role of teachers.
4. Are problem-oriented.
5. Are specific actions taken by the learner.
6. Involve many aspects of the learner, not just the cognitive.
7. Support learning both directly and indirectly.
8. Are not always observable.
9. Are often conscious.
10. Can be taught.
11. Are flexible.
12. Are influenced by a variety of factors.

Source: Oxford (1990)

In short, language learning strategies are applied by language learners as a means

to acquire and to use information that learners have acquired, stored or recalled, and

can also promote autonomous learning (O'Malley & Chamot, 1990:78-9; Nisbet &

Shucksmith, 1986:12, 92). Thus, as many researchers have defined language learning

strategies, the background and classification of language learning strategies should be

briefly summarised in the following section.

Background and classification of language learning strategies

Current research into language learning strategies originated from the framework

of learning strategies which began in the early seventies which focused on the

language learning strategies of successful (good) language learners (Rubin, 1975;

Stern, 1975; Naiman et al., 1978). These researches recognised lists of learning

strategies that applied to successful ESL/EFL learners. As indicated, there are many

language learning strategies which have been studied and classified in various ways

by many researchers. This research into language learning strategies can provide

different points of view to conduct further research into the process of ESL/EFL

learning and the complicated system of language learning strategies.

Figure 2 summarises the main background and provides a clear description of the

process of language learning strategy classification since the 1970s,

Figure 2 LANGUAGE LEARNING STRATEGY CLASSIFICATIONS SINCE THE 1970s

Language Learning Strategies Classification	Researcher(s) and Year
1. Active task approach	Naiman et al. (1978)
2. Realisation of language as a system	
3. Realisation of language as a means of communication and interaction	
4. Management of affective demands	
5. Monitoring L2 performance	
1. Strategies that directly affect learning	Rubin (1981)
• Clarification/verification	
• Monitoring	
• Memorisation	
• Guessing/inductive inferencing	
• Deductive reasoning	
• Practice	
2. Processes that contribute indirectly to learning	
• Creates opportunities for practice	
• Production tricks	
1. Cognitive strategies	Brown & Palinscar (1982)
2. Metacognitive strategies	
3. Social-affective strategies	
1. Cognitive strategies	O'Malley et al. (1985)
2. Metacognitive strategies	
3. Social-affective strategies	
Direct strategies:	Oxford (1990)
1. Memory strategies	
2. Cognitive strategies	
3. Compensation strategies	
Indirect strategies:	
1. Metacognitive strategies	
2. Affective strategies	
3. Social strategies	

In 1990 as mentioned in Figure 2, Oxford synthesised language leaning strategies which were divided into two categories: direct strategies and indirect strategies which help students to learn a target language. In the following section, Oxford's (1990) language learning strategies system will be presented, and discussed in more detail.

Language learning strategies system of Rebecca Oxford

Based on earlier research into learning strategies, Oxford (1990) developed a new language learning strategy system, which includes two main classifications: direct strategies and indirect strategies. Direct strategies are specific ways that involve use of language, sub-divided into memory, cognitive and compensation strategies. Indirect strategies do not directly involve using the language, but they support language learning (Ehrman & Oxford, 1990), and are further divided into metacognitive, affective, and social strategies, see Figure 3.

Figure 3 OXFORD'S LANGUAGE LEARNING STRATEGY CLASSIFICATION

Direct strategies:	
1. Memory strategies	- Creating mental linkages
	- Applying images and sounds
	- Reviewing well
	- Employing action
2. Cognitive strategies	- Practising
	- Receiving and sending messages
	- Analysing and reasoning
	- Creating structure for input and output
3. Compensation strategies	- Guessing intelligently
	- Overcoming limitations in speaking and writing
Indirect strategies:	
1. Metacognitive strategies	- Centring your learning
	- Arranging and planning your learning
	- Evaluating your learning
2. Affective strategies s	- Lowering your anxiety
	- Encouraging yourself
	- Taking your emotional temperature
3. Social strategies	- Asking questions
	- Cooperating with others
	- Empathising with others

Source: Oxford (1990)

These strategies can be specified as follows: 1) Memory strategies for remembering and retrieving new information. 2) Cognitive strategies for

understanding and producing the language. 3) Compensation strategies for using the language despite lack of knowledge. 4) Metacognitive strategies for coordinating the learning process. 5) Affective strategies for regulating emotions. 6) Social strategies for learning with others (Oxford, 1990:14-15). These six broad strategies include nineteen secondary strategies with a further sixty-two specific strategies and lay the fundamentals of Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL) (Oxford, 1990). Compared with earlier research into language learning strategies, Oxford's (1990) classification of language learning strategies is more comprehensive and detailed. Recent studies (Ehrman & Oxford, 1989; Oxford & Nyikos, 1989; Phillips, 1991; Green, 1991) applying the SILL claimed that using language learning strategies would have valuable influence on language proficiency. Based on this complete list of strategies, Oxford (1990) developed SILL, which is a useful instrument designed to test ESL/EFL learners' strategy use. As a result, researchers have been working on the factors that affect language learning strategy use, and these studies not only indicate variables affecting learning strategy use but also contribute to the field of investigation into language learning strategies. The following section will address the variables affecting language learning strategies.

Variables affecting language learning strategies

Many factors influence students using language learning strategies: age, sex, attitude, motivation, aptitude, learning stage, task requirements, teacher expectation, learning styles, individual differences, motivation, cultural differences, beliefs about language learning, and language proficiency (Rubin, 1975; Bialystok, 1979; Abraham & Vann, 1987, 1990; Oxford, 1989; Oxford & Nyikos 1989; Chamot & Kupper 1989; Ehrman and Oxford, 1995).   As the aim of investigating language learning strategies is to produce more effective learning, it has to focus on research into the relationship between using language learning strategies and language learning results.   Below will be presented a review of several main research based on language proficiency.

Rubin (1975) focused on observation of successful second language learners, and concluded that the characteristics of good language learners are to be a willing and accurate guesser, to have a strong drive to communicate, to learn from communication, to be uninhibited and willing to make mistakes, paying attention to form by looking for patterns, taking advantage of every opportunity to practise, monitoring the speech of themselves and others, and focusing on meaning. Therefore, Rubin suggested that language teachers could help less successful learners to promote their language proficiency by paying more attention to productive language learning

strategies. Bialystok (1979) examined the influences of using learning strategies on ESL learners' performance and found that using all four strategies (formal practising, monitoring, functional practicing, and inferring) in Bialystok's model of second language learning had positive effects on language learners' achievement, and only functional practising affected language learners' proficiency in all tasks. Oxford and Nyikos (1989) explored the relationship between language learners' proficiency and their use of strategy use as well. They used SILL to investigate 1200 students of university who studied five different foreign languages, and found that different background affected use of language learning strategies. Moreover, students' self-rating of proficiency levels was closely linked to their use of language learning strategies; for example, students who considered themselves to be proficient in speaking, listening or reading tended to employ more language learning strategies.

Vann & Abraham (1987, 1990) carried out research into successful and unsuccessful language learners. The results of their studies revealed that unsuccessful learners did use strategies generally considered as useful, and often they employed the same strategies as successful learners. However, the difference is that successful learners used strategies more appropriate in different situations than unsuccessful learners, and used a larger range of strategies in language learning more frequently

and appropriately. Ehrman and Oxford (1995) found that only cognitive strategies had a significant relationship with language proficiency in the SILL category. Other strategies, (memory, compensation, metacognitive, affective, and social strategies) had no significant relationship with proficiency. On the other hand, only cognitive strategies significantly influenced ESL/EFL learners' proficiency outcomes. To conclude, it is clear that there are significant relationships between language learning strategies and language proficiency. In other words, language learners who use language learning strategies more than others generally achieve greater language proficiency, and research into L2 learning demonstrated that good language learners used strategies more frequently and appropriately to enhance their target language learning. Therefore, in order to help language students to learn the target language more successfully, and effectively, the relationship between the employment of language learning strategies and language proficiency should be further explored on a worldwide scale. As mentioned in this section, research into language learning strategies has found that more proficient language learners use learning strategies more frequently and more different types of strategies than less proficient language learners and are better able to choose strategies appropriate to the task. Thus, the types

of language learning strategies used by different learners vary according to many

variables. The following section will focus on concepts of cultural background.

Cultural Background

The fact that certain types of learners defined by cultural background are

predisposed to use certain types of strategies, and many language learning strategies

may be based on ethnocentric assumptions about effective language learning

(Politzerof & McGroarty, 1985). As a result, it is difficult to argue that researchers

have adequately investigated the effects of cultural background in determining

strategy preferences (Politzer & McGroarty, 1985). Bedell (1993) found that different

cultural groups use particular kinds of strategies at different levels of frequency (cited

in Oxford et al., 1995). Furthermore, Asian students tend to prefer rote memorisation

and rule-oriented strategies (Politzer & McGroarty, 1985). For instance, Taiwanese

students seem far more structured, analytical, memory-based, and metacognitively

oriented than other groups (Oxford, 1994). O'Malley & Chamot (1990) also found

that Asian students prefer their own established rote learning strategies, and showed

Asian students to be less willing than Hispanic students to try new learning techniques

(O'Malley et al., 1985). Moreover, Huang & Van Naerrsen (1987); Tyacke &

Mendelsohn (1986) pointed out that Asian learners prefer strategies including rote

memorisation and a focus on the linguistic code, and Politzer & McGroarty (1985) and Noguchi (1991) found social strategies to be generally unpopular among Chinese and Japanese students. In short, there are many variables that affect the language learning strategies of different students, one of which is cultural background.

Conclusion

As mentioned in this paper, many researchers have found that numbers of variables such as age, gender, individual difference, motivation, cultural background, etc., which affect the use of language learning strategies. However, current literature points out that learners' individual and collective styles and learning preferences are strongly advised instructors engaging in language classroom (Bull & Ma, 2001; Fan, 2003; Oxford, 2003b; Yamamorio et al., 2003). The purpose behind such practices is to influence learners' language learning process so that their efforts, as well as those of their instructors, may be more successful.

This paper has talked about general concepts of language learning strategies. In order to better define the nature of the relationship between learning strategies, the factors that affect their usage, and their possible benefits for language learning, further research is needed. One of the issues is that the variables affecting the strategy choices of groups from different cultural backgrounds were discussed in the last section. Thus,

based on the theoretical aspects of language learning strategies derives from different research interests around the world (Oxford, 1999). For instance, learners who study in a different language learning environment might employ different strategies. According to my research background, to investigate the relationship between the length of stay in an English-speaking environment and the use of learning strategies by Chinese-speaking students will be suitable for further research.

References

Abraham, R. G., & Vann, R. J. (1987). Strategies of two language learners: A case study. In Wenden and Rubin (Eds.), Learner strategies in language learning. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall.

Anderson, N. J. & Vandergrift, L. (1996). Increasing metacognitive awareness in the L2 classroom by using think-aloud protocols and other verbal report formats. In R. L. Oxford (ed.), Language learning strategies around the world: Cross cultural perspectives, 3-18.

Block, E. (1986). The comprehension strategies of second language readers. TESOL Quarterly, 20, 3, 463-494.

Bialystok, E. (1978). A theoretical model of second language learning. Language Learning, 28, 69-83.

Bialystok, E. (1979). The role of conscious strategies in second language proficiency. Modern Language Journal, 65, 24-35.

Brown, A. L., & Palinscar, A. S. (1982). Inducing strategies learning from texts by means of informed self-control training. Topics in Learning and Learning Disabilities, 2, 1-17.

Bedell, D. (1993). Cross-cultural variation in choice of language learning strategies: A mainland Chinese investigation with comparison to previous studies. Unpublished master's thesis, University of Alabama, Tuscaloosa, AL.

Baily, C. A. (1996). Unobtrusive computerized observation of compensation strategies for writing to determine the effectiveness of strategy instruction. In R. L. Oxford (ed.), Language learning strategies around the world: Cross cultural perspectives, 141-150.

Bull, S., & Ma, Y. (2001). Raising learner awareness of language learning strategies in situations of limited resources.. Interactive Learning Environments, 9, 171-200.

Chamot, A.U. (1987). The learning strategies of ESL students. In Wenden and Rubin (Eds.), Learner strategies in language learning. Englewood Cliffs, NJ : Prentice-Hall.

Carrell, P. L. (1989). Metacognitive awareness and second language reading. Modern Language Journal, 73, 2, 121-34.

Chamot, A. U. & Kupper, L. (1989). Learning strategies in foreign language instruction. Foreign Language Annual, 22, 13-24.

Cohen, A. D. & Scott, K. (1996). A synthesis of approachers to assessing language learning strategies. In R. L. Oxford (ed.), Language learning strategies around the world: Cross cultural perspectives, 89-108.

Crystal, D. (1997). English as a Global Language. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Cohen, A. D. (1998). Strategies in learning and using a second language. London and New York: Longman.

Cook, V. (2001). Second language learning and language teaching (third edition). London: Edward Arnold.

Denzin, N. K. (1978). The research act: a theoretical introduction to sociological

methods. New York: McGraw Hill (2nd edn.).

Ehrman, M. & Oxford, R. (1990). Adult language learning styles and strategies in an intensive training setting. Modern Language Journal, 74, 311-317.

Ehrman, M. & Oxford, R. (1995). Cognitive plus: correlations of language learning success. Modern Language Journal, 79, 67-89.

Fan, M. Y. (2003). Frequency of use, perceived usefulness, and actual usefulness of second language vocabulary strategies: A study of Hong Kong learners. Modern Language Journal, 87, 222-241.

Green, J. (1991). Language learning strategies of Puerto Rican university students. Paper presented at the annual meeting of Puerto Rico TESOL, San Juan, PR.

Graham, S. (1997). Effective Language learning: Positive Strategies for Advanced Level Language Learning. Clevedon: Multilingual Matters Ltd.

Huang, X.-H. (1984). An investigation of learning strategies in oral communication that Chinese EFL learners in China employ. Unpublished master's thesis, Chinese University of Hong Kong.

Huang, X.-H., & Van Naerrsen, M. (1987). Learning strategies for oral communication. Applied Linguistics, 8, 287-307.

Kachru, B. B. (1982). The Other Tongue: English Across Cultures. Urbana: University of Illinois Press.

Larsen-Freeman, D. (1986). Techniques and Principles in Language Teaching. Hong Kong: Oxford University Press.

Lee, G. L., Laina, H., Meyer, J. E. L., Varaprasad, C., & Young, C. (2003). Teaching English to students from China. Singapore: Singapore University Press.

McDonough, S. H. (1999). Learner strategies. Language Teaching, 32, 1-18.

Macaro, E. (2001). Learning strategies: in foreign and second language classrooms.

London: Continuum.

Naiman, N., Fröhlich, M. & Todesco, A. (1978). The Good Lnaguage Learner. Toronto: Ontario Institute for Studies in Education.

Nisbet, J. & Shucksmith, J. (1986). Learning strategies. London, Boston and Henley: Routledge & Kegan Paul.

Noguchi, T. (1991). Review of language learning strategy research and its implications. Unpublished bachelor's thesis, Tottori University, Tottori, Japan.

O'Malley, J. M., Chamot, A. U., Stewner-Manzanares, G., Kupper, L., & Russo, R. P. (1985a). Learning strategies used by beginning and intermediate ESL students. Language Learning, 35, 21-46.

O'Malley, J. M., Chamot, A. U., Stewner-Manzanares, G., Kupper, L., & Russo, R. P. (1985b). Learning strategy applications with students of English as a second language. TESOL Quarterly, 19, 557-584.

O'Malley, J. M. & Chamot, A. U. (1990). Learning strategies in second language acquisition. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Oxford, R. & Nyikos, M. (1989). Variables affecting choices of language learning strategies by university students. Modern Language Journal, 73, 291-300.

Oxford, R. (1989). Use of language learning strategies: A synthesis of studies with implications for strategy training. System, 17(2), 235-247.

Oxford, R. & Crookall, D. (1989). Research on language learning strategies: Methods, findings, and instructional issues. Modern Language Journal, 73(4), 404-419.

Oxford, R., Lavin, R. & Crookall, D. (1989). Language learning strategies, the communicative approach, and their classroom implications. Foreign Language Annals, 22, 29-39.

Oxford, R. (1990). Language learning strategies: What every teacher should know. New York: Newbury House.

Oxford, R. (1994). Gender differences in L2 styles and strategies: Do they exist? Should we pay attention? In J. Alatis (ed.), Strategies interaction and language acquisition: Theory, practice, research. 541-557. Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press.

Oxford, R. & Burry-Stock, J. A. (1995). Assessing the use of language learning strategies worldwide with the ESL/EFL version of the Strategy Inventory for language Learning (SILL). System, 23, 153-175.

Oxford, R. L. (ed.) (1996). Language learning strategies around the world: Cross cultural perspectives. University of Hawai'i at Manoa: Second language teaching and curriculum center technical report 13.

Oxford, R. L. (2003b). Relationships between second language learning strategies and proficiency in the context of learner autonomy and self-regulation. Revista Canaria de Estudios Ingleses (Canarian Journal of English Studies), 38, 109-126.

Pickett, G. D. (1978). The foreign language learning process. London: British Council English Teaching Information Centre Occasional Paper.

Politzer, R. L., & McGroarty, M. (1985). An exploratory study of learning behaviours and their relationship to gains in linguistic and communicative competence. TESOL Quarterly, 19, 103-123.

Poulisse, N., Bongaerts, T. & Kellerman, E. (1987). The use of retrospective verbal reports in the analysis of compensatory strategies. In G. Faerch & G. Kasper (ed.), Introspection in second language research, 213-229.

Phillips, V. (1991). A look at learner strategy use and ESL proficiency. The CATESOL Journal, 57-67.

Rubin, J. (1975). What the "good language learner " can teach us. TESOL Quarterly, 9, 41-51.

Rigney, J. (1978). Learning strategies: A theoretical perspective. In O'Neil, H. F. Jr. (Ed.) Learning Strategies. New York: Academic Press.

Rubin, J. (1981). The study of cognitive prodessed in second language learning. Applied Linguistics, 2, 117-131.

Rubin, J. (1987). Learner strategies: Theoretical assumptions, research history and typology. In A. L. Wenden & J. Rubin (Eds.), Learner strategies in language learning, 15-30. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall.

Richard, J. C. (1994). Reflective teaching in second language classroom. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Stern, H.H. (1975). What can we learn from the good language learner? Canadian: Modern Language Review, 31, 304-318.

Tyacke, M., & Mendelsohn, D. (1986). Students needs: Cognitive as well as communicative. TESL Canada journal, 1, 177-198.

Vann, R. & Abraham, R. (1990). Strategies of unsuccessful language learners. TESOL Quarterly, 24(2), 223-234.

Wenden, A. L. (1987a). Conceptual background and utility. In A. L. Wenden & J. Rubin (Eds.), Learner strategies in language learning, 3-13. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall.

Williams, M. & Burden, R. (1997). Psychology for language teachers. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Yamamorio, K., Isoda, T., Hiromori, T., & Oxford, R. L. (2003). Using cluster analysis to uncover L2 learner differences in strategy use, will to learn, and achievement over time. International Review of Applied Linguistics, 41, 381-409.

About the Author

Lee, Chien Kuo (c.k.lee@ncl.ac.uk) is a first year I-PhD student in Educational and Applied Linguistics at the School of Education, Communication and Language Sciences, Newcastle University. His research interests include language learning strategies used by learners from different cultural background, and drama, story-telling as an approach to language teaching and learning.