

Investigating Language Learning Strategies in Male and Female ESL Learners of SBBU, SBA

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Abstract

Language learning Strategies (LLS) are vital and helpful in the learning of English as a second language (ESL). Though, it actualizes that the unawareness of their LLSs has affected ESL learners in the area of this study in their learning of English language. Thus, this study investigates Language Learning Strategies in Male and Female ESL Learners of undergraduate students of Shaheed Benazir Bhutto University, Shaheed Benazir Abad. The subjects were selected by using stratified sampling method. All of the students belong to the English department. The instrument used for this survey was questionnaire. It is a 50-item Likert-type survey with five-scale responses for the six key approach groups. The modified version of SILL questionnaire (Oxford, 1990) was used in this study to evaluate the types of language learning strategies utilized by male and female learners by Pakistani ESL students and their frequency of use. The data was analyzed using MS Excel by graphs. Furthermore, graphs were also carried out to know the essential effect of the strategies on the gender of students. The findings show that male students were frequent users of memory, affective and social strategies to remember English words, improve fluency, and increase confidence. And female students use cognitive, metacognitive and competence strategies to manipulate target language, enhance self-regulation, and strengthen the meaning of words, with all strategies being prevalent among all participants. Lastly, limitations of this research and the suggestions for future research are also presented.

Keywords: *Language learning strategies, gender, second language learning*

INTRODUCTION

Learning strategies have been the topic of discussions for a long time. Research on language learning strategies (LLS) almost began in the 1960s, particularly after the developments in cognitive psychology, and has received much attention since late 1970s. From then, researchers on the field have broadened our understanding of the processes learners use to develop their skills

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in L2. Rubin (1975) argued that many foreign language teachers fail to pay attention to the learning process. Dansereau (1978), advocating the same view, mentions several drawbacks of overemphasis on teaching methods, including inadvertent reinforcement of ineffective and non-transferable LS. Similarly Harlow (1988) reports that although the instructional process involves both teachers and learners, the bulk of research efforts throughout the history of education focused upon teaching techniques, and neglected the importance of learners. Expressing the rise of a new paradigm, Reiss (1985) reported, the shift of emphasis from teacher to learner in L2 research. Many researchers have been trying to find possible factors that affect learning strategies. One of the factors that caught the attention is gender differences. Males and females learn differently from each other (Ebel, 1999; Cavanaugh, 2002, as cited in Tatarinceva, 2009). Males tend to be more visual; more peers motivated and learn less by listening than females. In contrast, females tend to be auditory and learn well when it is quiet (Marcus, 1999; Pizzo, 2000, as cited in Tatarinceva, 2009). Tannen (1992) suggests that male students prefer doing learning tasks which involve the talk in public settings more because they feel compelled to establish or maintain their position in the group. On the other hand, female students prefer talking more in private settings because they see conversation as an important way of maintaining relationships. Furthermore, females are better than males at language learning tasks relating to remembering verbal information, faces, names, and object locations. As for males, they do better with the travel directions tasks (Colley, 2001; Ong, 1999; Larrabee & Crook, 1993 as cited in Tatarinceva, 2009). Also, Kraft and Nichel (1995) proved that females were better at verbal fluency, vocabulary and quality of speech, but male students were better at writing. Still, despite many studies, inconclusive evidence on the influence of gender differences has been found (see Oxford and Nyikos, 1989 or Taguchi, 2002).

As previously mentioned, research into the use of language learning strategies started during the 1970s and is still widely researched into today. Although some work on learner strategies have been conducted in Malaysia (such as Kamarul Shukri Mat Teh, Mohamed Amin Embi, Nik Mohd Rahimi Nik Yusoff & Zamri Mahamod, 2009; Tan Teow et al., 2010), such studies are few in number. Studies on learner strategies are important for they can lead to a better understanding of how learners approach learning and findings can help clarify the kinds of strategies used by different learners. In this study, learner's background was taken into consideration which includes gender (male and female) and year of study (freshmen, sophomore and junior).

The first research on language learning strategies dates back to the mid-1970s, when an approach was adopted to determine why some learners were more successful than others in learning a second language. Some scholars (Naiman, Frohlich, Stern, & Todesco, 1978; Rubin, 1975; Stern, 1975) drew attention to good language learners to determine their characteristics in second 86 Alejandra Montero-Saiz Aja language learning. According to Rubin (1975, pp. 45–47), a good language learner: (1) was a great guesser; (2) had an urge to communicate; (3) was willing to apply his/her knowledge; (4) focused on form; (5) practiced the language; (6) observed both his/her and others' speech; and (7) focused on meaning. Since then, language learning strategies have been thoroughly investigated (Cohen, 1998; O'Malley & Chamot, 1990; Oxford, 1990, 2011) because they have been considered as influencing the way learners learn a SL or FL.

In terms of gender and language learning strategies, Kamarul et al. (2009) show that females report using language learning strategies more often than males and there are significant differences between genders in the use of affective and metaphysic strategies. Females tend to use them more often than males. According to the above-mentioned issue, it can be seen that gender is one of the factors that can influence language learning strategies. Therefore, the present study aims to investigate the gender differences in language learning strategies that Thai learners prefer. The objectives of the present study are to identify language learning strategies.

AIM OF THE STUDY

The aim of this study is to determine gender differences in the use of learning strategies and differences in the applications of certain types of LLS.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- What kinds of language learning strategies are used by male ESL learners?
- What kinds of language learning strategies are used by female ESL learners?
- What is the difference between male and female ESL learner's use of LLS?

LITERATURE REVIEW

Definitions of Language Learning Strategies (LLSs)

LLSs are especially important for language learning because they are tools for active, self-directed involvement, which is essential for developing communicative competence (Zhang,

2012, p.5). The concept of LLSs has been defined by many researchers (Stern, 1983; Weinstein & Mayer, 1986; Chamot, 1987; Rubin, 1987; Oxford, 1989). Rod Ellis (1994) offered the following definitions of LLSs put forward by well-known linguists.

Table 2.1 Definitions of LLSs (1990)

Definitions of LLSs (from the 1990s to now)	
Source	Definition
O'Malley & Chamot (1990)	"Learning strategies are special thoughts or behaviors that individuals use to help them comprehend, learn or retain new information."
Cohen (1990)	"Learning strategies are learning processes which are consciously selected by the learner."
Oxford (1992)	"Learning strategies are behaviors or actions which learners use to make language learning more successful, self-directed and enjoyable. These strategies can facilitate the internalization, storage, retrieval, or use of the new language. Strategies are tools for self-directed involvement necessary for developing the communicative ability."
Nunan (1999)	"Learning strategies are mental and communicative procedures learners use during learning in order to learn and use language."
Richard & Platt (2000)	"Learning strategies are intentional behavior and thoughts that learners make use of during learning in order to better help them understand, learn or remember new information."

Classification of Language Learning Strategies

Knowing how to use language learning strategies can potentially ensure successful language learning. Many factors influence the type and frequency of LLS use. Learners do not use similar strategies in the process of language learning and good learners differ from poor learners both in

type and frequency of strategies used. Language learning strategies can be divided into two types: direct learning strategies and indirect learning strategies. Direct learning strategies directly involve the target language, while indirect learning strategies pave the way for language learners without directly involving the target language. Different researchers have classified language learning strategies into different categories. The most general categories are cognitive, metacognitive, communicative, socio-affective, and so forth. Oxford (1990) classifies strategies into the following six types:

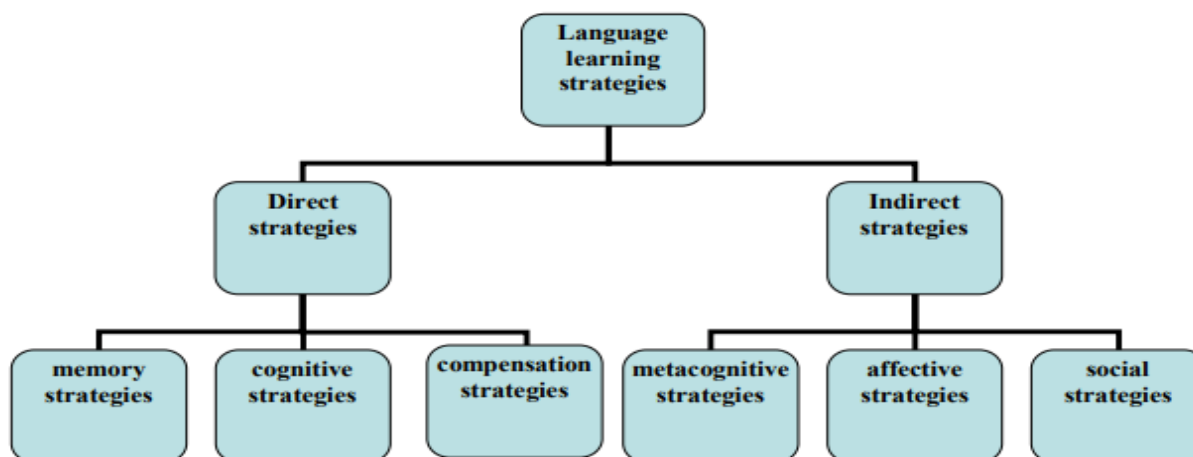


Figure 1: Summary of Oxford's (1990) classification of LLS

1. Metacognitive strategies: these strategies are used for organizing, focusing, and evaluating one's own learning.
2. Affective strategies: they are used for handling emotions or attitudes.
3. Social strategies: these are strategies which learners use to cooperate with others in the learning process.
4. Cognitive strategies: they link new information with existing schemata and for analyzing and classifying it.
5. Memory strategies: they are used for entering new information into memory storage and for retrieving it when needed.

Gender and Second/Foreign Language Acquisition

The field of gender and SLA or FLA has been the focus of research since the 1970s. At first, studies focused exclusively on sex as a male/female binary opposition, only considering it as a biological category (Ehrlich, 1997; Sunderland, 2000). The center of attention was sex differences in language use (vocabulary, grammar, and speech), Gender differences have been investigated in several areas in SLA and FLA, such as listening comprehension (Boyle, 1987; Namaziandost et al., 2018), language achievement (Burstall, 1975; Ekstrand, 1980), vocabulary and learning strategies (Noprianto & Purnawarman, 2019; Oxford & Nyikos, 1989), or learning styles (Oxford & Ehrman, 1995; Reid, 1987). The general belief is that females are better language learners, but this is not always the case.

In Oxford and Nyikos (1989), and Oxford and Ehrman's research (1995) in the USA, female university students were reported to use more language learning strategies than males. The same occurs with Turkish EFL learners (Aslan, 2009; Oflaz, 2019; Salahshour, Sharifi, & Salahshour, 2013; Yilmaz, 2010), whose studies proved female advantage. The disparity in these investigations was that all accounted for university students, except Salahshour et al. (2013) whose sample comprised high school learners. Along the same lines, research with Spanish and Polish university informants (García Herrero & Jiménez Vivas, 2015; López Aguado, 2011; Pawlak, 2013) concluded that females make a larger use of learning strategies. Similarly, investigations conducted with Asian learners (Ghadessy, 1998; Goh & Foong, 1997; Khan, Shah, & Ahmad, 2018; Lan & Oxford, 2003; Tamada, 1996) purported that women employ more learning strategies than men. The only difference was that Lan and Oxford's (2003) sample was composed of 6th graders, instead of university students. Alhaisoni (2012) and Alhaysony (2017) focused on Saudi Arabian university learners, but no significant differences in these strategies were encountered SBarati (2016), and AlSohbani (2018) concurred with these outcomes, but their samples came from Chinese, Iranian, and Turkish students, respectively. However, the first two studies dealt with university learners, whilst AlSohbani (2018) examined 10th, 11th, and 12th graders. By contrast, research conducted in Singapore by Wharton (2000), in Turkey by Tercanlioglu (2004), and in Indonesia by Sumarni and Rachmawaty (2019) demonstrated that men exceed women in their use of language learning strategies.

Gender differences in the use of learning strategies

Numerous empirical researches have shown that gender has a significant effect on the extent of strategy use. Women use learning strategies more often than men (Dreyer & Oxford, 1996; Green & Oxford, 1995; Lan & Oxford, 2003; Lee & Oh, 2001; Oxford & Ehrman, 1995; in Lee and Oxford, 2008). Results of the research carried out by Oxford et al. indicate that gender has a significant effect on the frequency of strategy use. The research findings indicate that women more frequently use memory, cognitive and social strategies. Oxford and Nyikos (1989) examined the use of learning strategies on a sample of 1200 adult French, Spanish, Italian and German language learners and demonstrated that gender plays a decisive role in the selection of strategies. The research results show that women tend to deploy all types of strategies more frequently, which corresponds to the results of previous researches on the role of gender in foreign language learning. These findings were also replicated in the research conducted by Ehrman and Oxford (1989) on a sample of 78 adult learners, including students and professors at the faculties of philological studies.

METHODOLOGY

Research method

For this study, a quantitative research design is used to investigate language learning strategies (LLS) in male and female ESL learners at the undergraduate level. This design allows for the systematic collection and analysis of numerical data to address the research objectives.

Population and Sampling

The target population for this study consists of male and female ESL learners enrolled in undergraduate programs. A stratified sampling technique utilized to select participants who meet the criteria for presence in the study. The sample size determined based on statistical power analysis to ensure adequate representation and reliability of the findings.

Participates

The participants attending this study are (80) undergraduate students; 40 are male and 40 are female ESL learners, and they all are randomly selected as (20) from each batch from 1st year, 2nd year, 3rd year and 4th year students of English department at Shaheed Benazir Bhutto university, Shaheed Benazir Abad.

Data Collection Procedures

The SILL questionnaire was distributed to 80 respondent of English department in regular classroom. They were given a brief explanation of what the survey is about and all the questions were clarified. As most of the students were unable to understand the questions, the researchers had to translate the same into dialect to obtain the proper answers. Clear instructions and guidelines will be given to ensure accurate and reliable responses. The participants have the flexibility to complete the questionnaire, and the class teachers help with the administration, distribution, and collection of the filled questionnaire. Participants are being informed about the purpose of the study, their rights as participants, and the confidentiality and anonymity of their responses.

Data Analysis

All 80 questionnaires were collected, and the data were put into a computer and analyzed through Microsoft Excel. Descriptive statistics, including graphs, were calculated to show all the participants on the basis of gender. And the responses were analyzed by the nominal scale.

Instrument

The present study used quantitative research method, and collect data through questionnaire. The researcher has adopted a modified version of questionnaire which was used by Oxford (1990), Strategy inventory language learning (SILL).

Strategy inventory language learning (SILL)

The SILL questionnaire (Oxford, 1990, pp. 293-300) was used in this study to evaluate the types of language learning strategies utilized by Pakistani ESL students and their frequency of use. It's a 50-item Liker-type survey with five-scale responses for the six key approach groups shown in Table 1. According to Oxford, learners with a mean of 3.5 or more were classified as high strategy users, learners with a mean of less than 2.4 were classified as low strategy users, and learners with a mean of 2.4 to 3.5 were classified as medium strategy users.

Table 3.1: Distribution of strategy items according to six strategy type:

S.No.	Strategy type	Items	Total
1.	Memory	1-9	9
2.	Cognitive	10-23	14
3.	Compensation	24-29	6
4.	Metacognitive	30-38	9
5.	Affective	39-44	6
6.	Social	45-50	6
			50

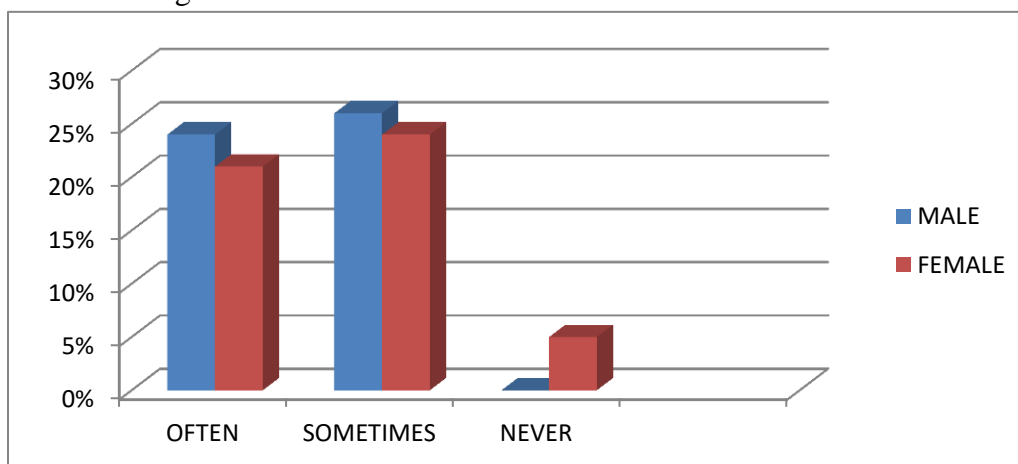
RESULTS

The quantitative findings of our investigation, which address the research questions and hypotheses mentioned in the earlier chapters, are presented in this chapter. This chapter aims to present an unbiased description of the information we gathered and the findings from our research. It is essential to stress that the presentation of the genuine data and statistical results free from opinions or interpretation is the main goal of this work.

For representing what kinds of language learning strategies are used by male and female ESL learners and what is the difference between male and female ESL learner's use of LLS? Which strategies are preferred by Pakistani undergraduate students, the researcher has inserted the obtained data from the questionnaire survey into fifty figures. All figures were divided according to the six main strategies for language learning proposed by Oxford (1990) in their strategy model.

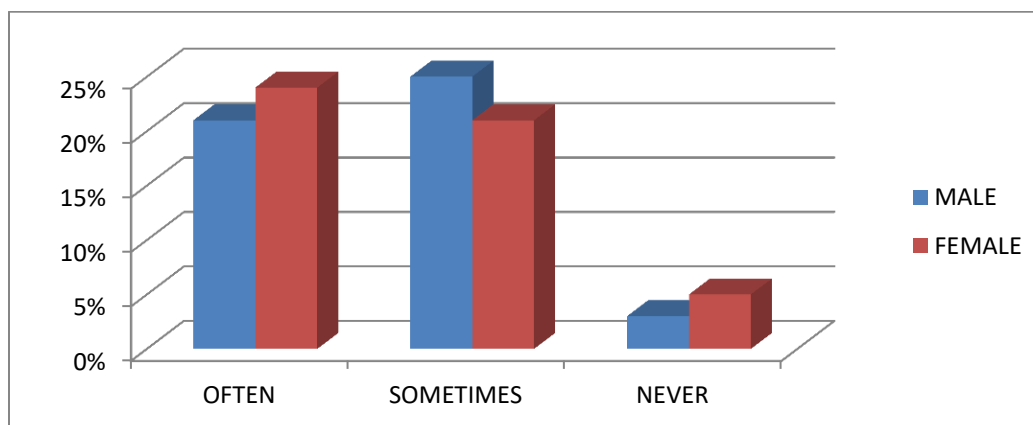
PART A: MEMORY STRATEGIES

Fig 1: (Q: 1) I think of relationships between what I already know and new things I learn in English.



According to figure 1, 80 students answered, where 24% Male students chose often, 26% of them chose sometimes, 0% chose Never. While 21% Female students chose often, 24% of them chose sometimes, 5% chose Never. It is notable that while a small minority of female students (5%) selected "never," no male students selected this choice. Both male and female students selected "often" or "sometimes," with a slightly higher percentage of female students selecting "often" than male students.

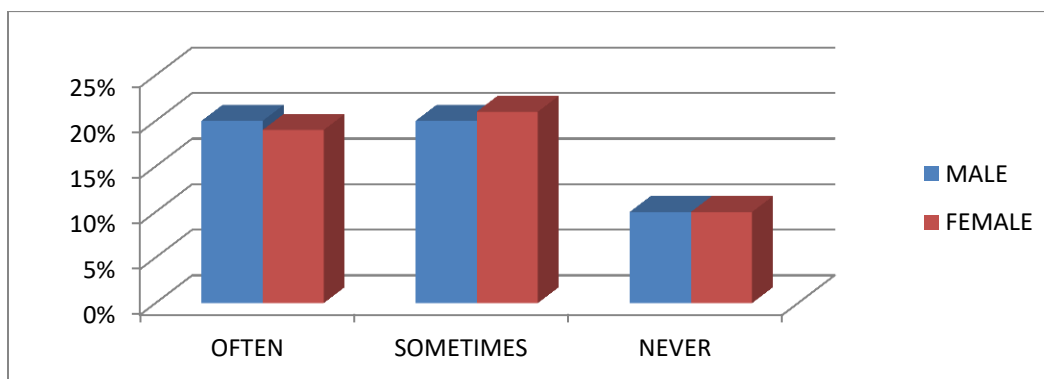
Fig 2: (Q: 2) I use new English words in a sentence so I can remember



According to figure 2, 80 students answered, where 21% Male students chose often, 25% of them chose sometimes, 3% chose Never. While 24% Female students chose often, 21% of them chose sometimes, 5% chose Never. This data provides an understanding of the choices made by male

and female students in answer to the survey question, highlighting the differences in their opinions."

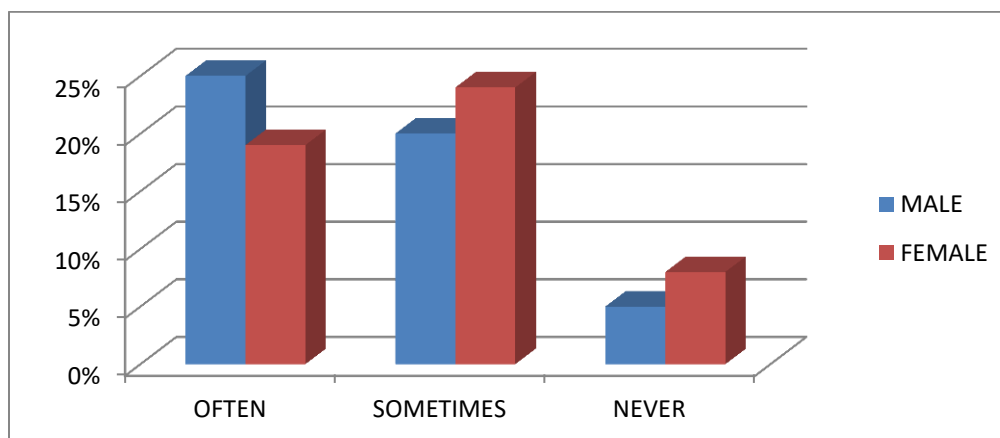
Fig 3: (Q: 3) I connect the sound of new English and an image of the word to help me remember the word.



According to figure 3, 80 students answered, where 20% Male students chose often, 20% of them chose sometimes, 10% chose Never. While 19% Female students chose often, 21% of them chose sometimes, 10% chose Never. It provides an informative viewpoint on the techniques used by male and female learners to associate new English words' sounds with mental pictures. It draws attention to the different levels of interaction with this memory tool, which can be impacted by personal preferences, unique learning styles, or prior language learning experiences. Understanding these tendencies might be helpful in designing language acquisition methodologies to more effectively meet the requirements of various learners.

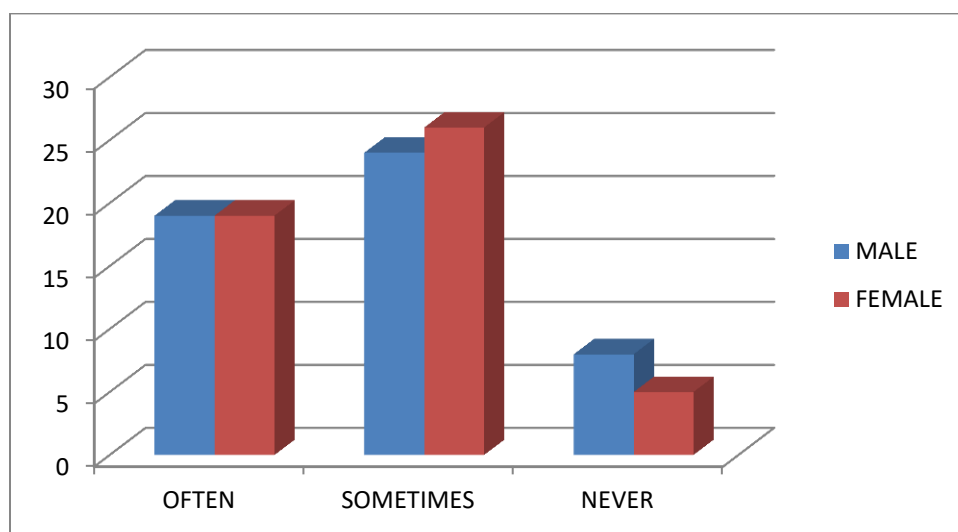
PART B: COGNITIVE STRATEGIES

Fig 1: (Q: 10) I say or write new English words several times



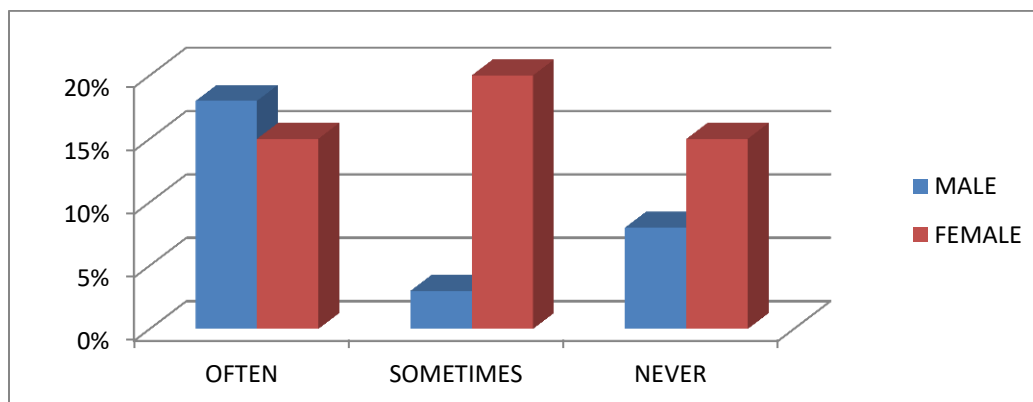
According to figure 10, 80 students answered, where 25% Male students chose often, 20% of them chose sometimes, 5% chose Never. While 19% Female students chose often, 24% of them chose Sometimes, 8% chose Never. It indicates how male and female students use repetition techniques differently. Although both groups use this strategy to some level, a greater number of female students represented by the "Never" category do not believe that repetition is helpful in language learning. Because not every learner finds the repetition technique to be equally effective, it is critical to understand these variations in order to modify language learning methods to meet the specific needs and preferences of individual students.

Fig 11: (Q: 11) I try to talk like native English speakers.



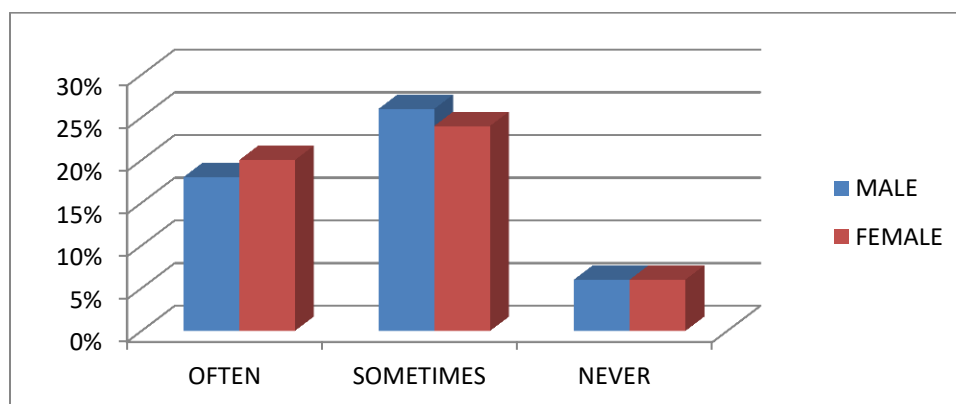
According to figure 11, 80 students answered, where 19% Male students chose often, 24% of them chose sometimes, 8% chose Never. While 19% Female students chose often, 26% of them chose sometimes, 5% chose Never. It indicates that students, both male and female, have differing levels of motivation to speak like fluent English speakers. While the percentages for "often" and "sometimes" are comparable, the "Never" category shows that more than half of female students do not use this particular method or may prefer different approaches to language learning. It is important to recognize these differences in order to modify language-learning strategies to meet the different requirements and tastes of all students.

Fig 12 (Q: 12) I practice the sounds of English.



According to figure 12, 80 students answered, where 18% Male students chose often, 3% of them chose sometimes, 8% chose Never. While 15% Female students chose often, 20% of them chose sometimes, 15% chose Never. The information provided presents a clear picture of the ways in which male and female students practice English sounds differently. It indicates that while a slightly higher percentage of male students selected "Often," a higher percentage of female students selected "Sometimes" and "Never" in comparison to male students.

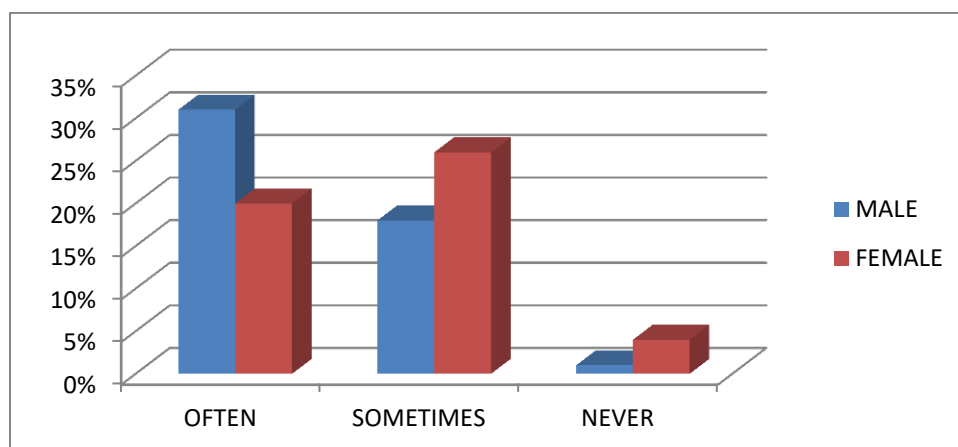
Fig 13 (Q: 13) I use the English words I know in different ways.



According to figure 13, 80 students answered, where 18% Male students chose often, 26% of them chose sometimes, 6% chose Never. While 20% Female students chose often, 24% of them chose sometimes, 6% chose Never. This data provides a spotlight on the ways in which male and female students utilize English vocabulary differently. Interestingly, more female students than

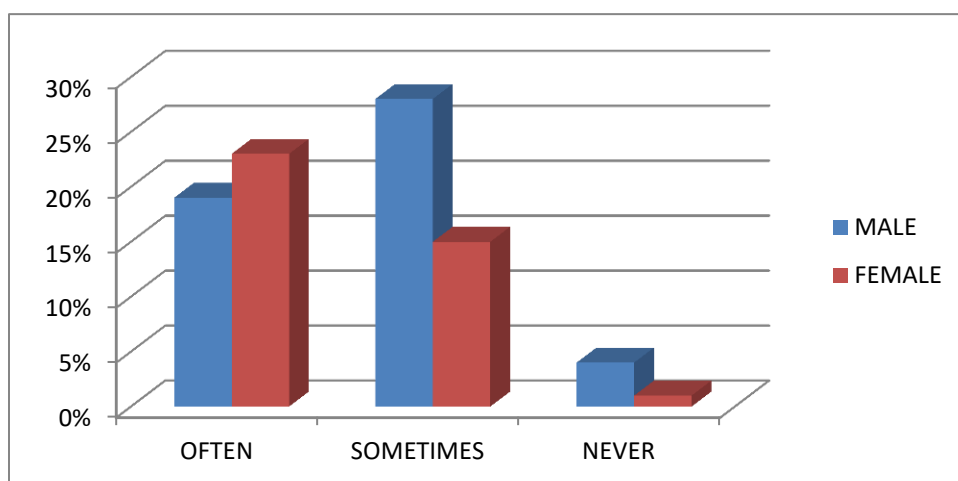
male students selected "Often," with a slightly higher percentage of male students choosing "Sometimes."

Fig 14 (Q 14) I start conversations in English.



According to figure 14, 80 students answered, where 31% Male students chose often, 18% of them chose sometimes, 1% chose Never. While 20% Female students chose often, 26% of them chose sometimes, 4% chose Never. The information provided helps to explain the differences between male and female students' tendency for starting up conversations in English. Additionally, more male students than female students selected "Often," with a slightly higher percentage of female students choosing "Sometimes."

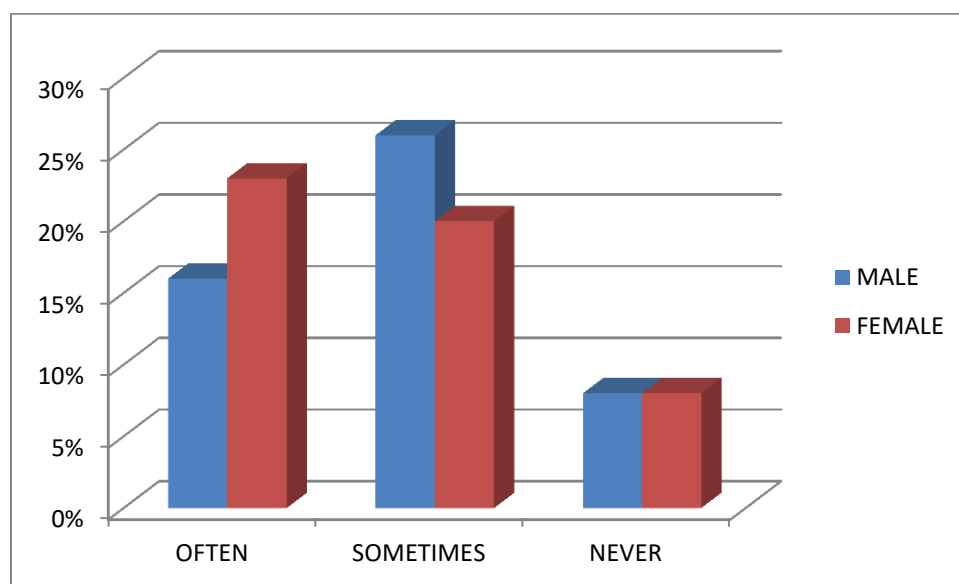
Fig 15 (Q: 15) I watch English language TV shows or go to movies spoken in English.



According to figure 15, 80 students answered, where 19% Male students chose often, 28% of them chose Sometimes 4% chose Never. While 23% Female students chose often, 15% of them chose sometimes, 1% chose Never. This data provides light on the viewing preferences of both male and female students for English-language films and TV series. Interestingly, more female students than male students selected "Often," while a higher percentage of male students chose "Sometimes." For both groups, the percentage of students who selected "Never" is comparatively low.

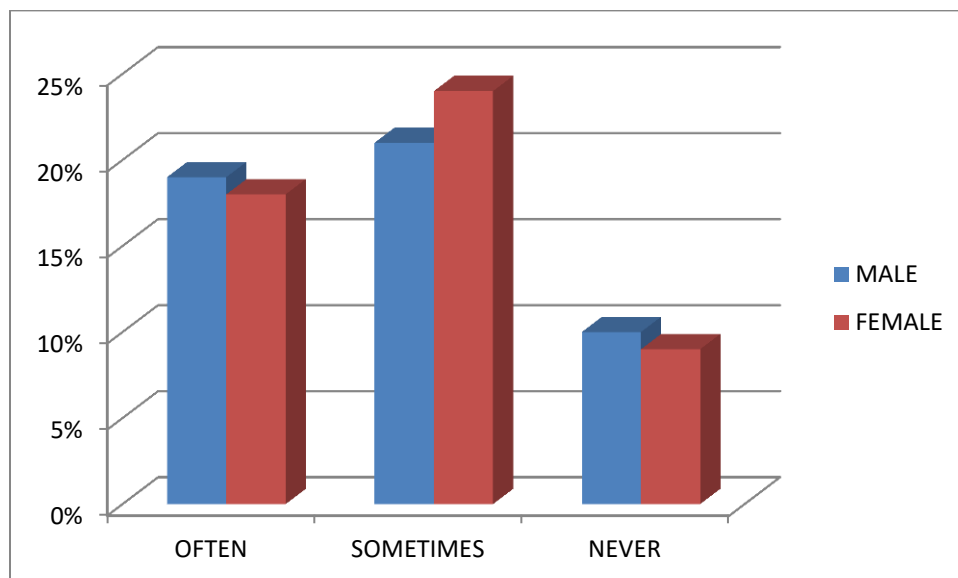
PART C: COMPENSATION STRATEGIES

Fig 24: (Q: 24) To understand unfamiliar English words, I make guesses.



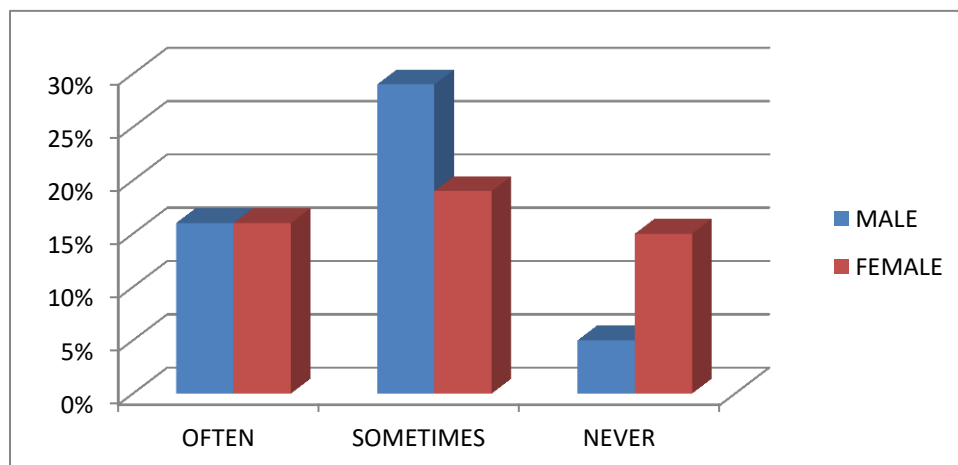
According to figure 24, 80 students answered, where 16% Male students chose often, 26% of them chose sometimes, 8% chose Never. While 23% Female students chose often, 20% of them chose sometimes, 8% chose Never. This data provides light on how male and female students approach learning new vocabulary in the English language. The data indicates that a greater proportion of female students chose "Often" or "Sometimes" when making guesses, whereas a slightly higher percentage of male students chose "Never." "For both male and female students, the "Never" category which represents students who do not employ this strategy is comparatively low. This suggests that as part of their language learning process, most students in both groups attempt to guess in order to understand unfamiliar English words.

Fig 25: (Q: 25) When I can't think of a word during a conversation in English, I use gestures.



According to figure 25, 80 students answered, where 19% Male students chose often, 21% of them chose sometimes, 10% chose Never. While 18% Female students chose often, 24% of them chose sometimes, 9% chose Never. This data provides light on how male and female students respond when they are unable to remember a word used in an English conversation. It indicates that while female students had a slightly higher percentage choosing "Often" or "Sometimes," male students chose "Sometimes" or "Never" in slightly higher proportion than female students. In English conversations, most students in both groups depend on gestures to help them communicate when they are unable to think of a word.

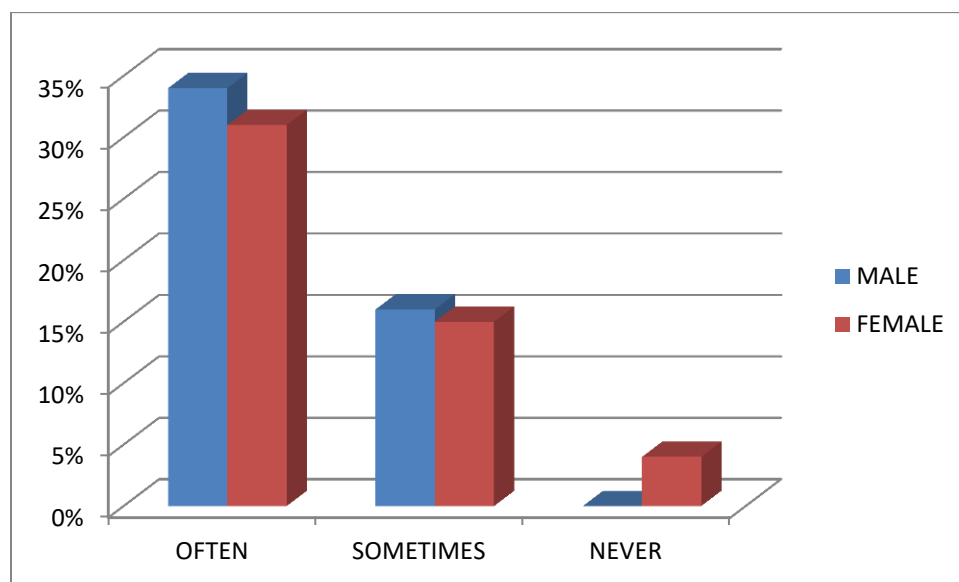
Fig 26: (Q: 26) I make up new words if I do not know the right ones in English.



According to figure 26, 80 students answered, where 16% Male students chose often, 29% of them chose sometimes, 5% chose Never. While 16% Female students chose often, 19% of them chose sometimes, 15% chose Never. This data provides light on how male and female students approach new vocabulary in the English language. It implies that an equal number of students, male and female, frequently or occasionally create new words when they don't know the proper ones. The proportion of female students who fall into the "Never" category which denotes students who do not use this approach is slightly greater than that of male students. This suggests that when they come across unfamiliar words in English, most students in both groups are willing to invent new words as a way to bridge language gaps.

PART D: METACOGNITIVE STRATEGIES

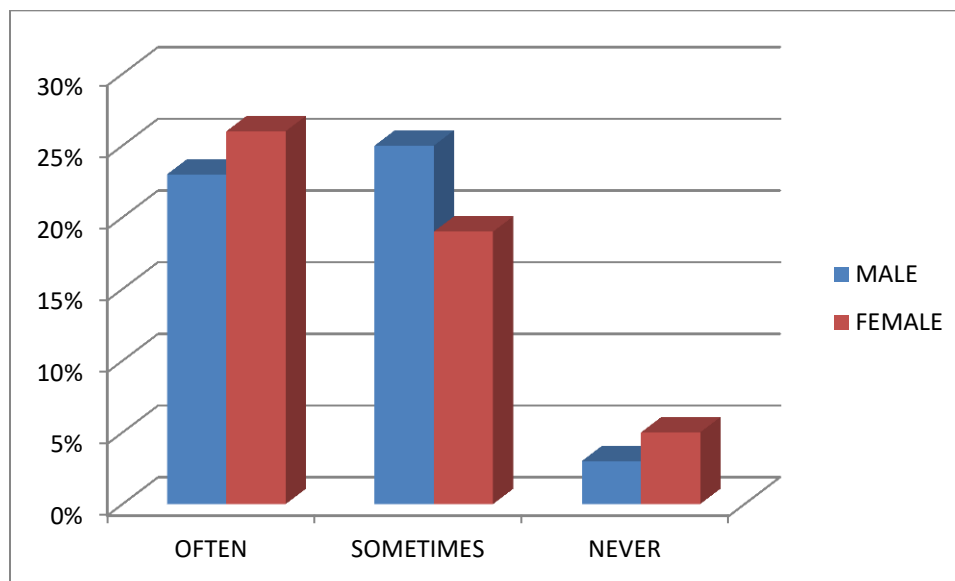
Fig 30: (Q: 30) I try to find as many ways as I can to use my English.



According to figure 30, 80 students answered, where 34% Male students chose often, 16% of them chose sometimes, 0% chose Never. While 31% Female students chose often, 15% of them chose sometimes, 4% chose Never. This data provides light on how male and female students approach using their English language proficiency. It indicates that while female students selected "Sometimes" slightly more frequently than male students, male students chose "Often" in greater proportion. Interestingly, neither male nor female students fall into the "Never" category, which indicates those who do not try to find alternative ways to use their English. This suggests that a

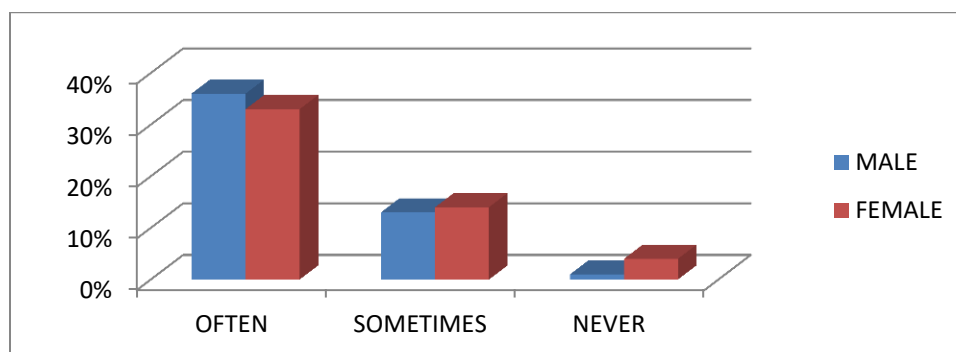
significant portion of students in both cohorts actively search out chances to apply their English language proficiency in diverse settings.

Fig 31: (Q: 31) I notice my English mistakes and use that information to help me do better.



According to figure 31, 80 students answered, where 23% Male students chose often, 25% of them chose sometimes, 3% chose Never. While 26% Female students chose often, 19% of them chose sometimes, 5% chose Never. This data provides light on the approaches taken by male and female students to the process of improving their English. It appears that more female students than male students selected "Often," with a slightly higher percentage of male students choosing "Sometimes." "As part of their language learning and development process, most students in both groups actively seek out and learn from their English mistakes.

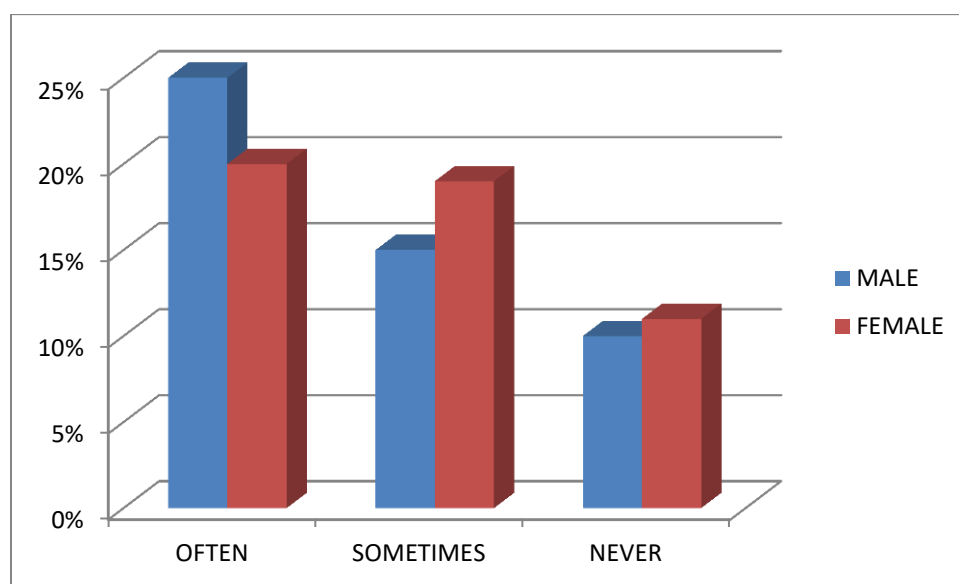
Fig 32: (Q: 32) I pay attention when someone is speaking English.



According to figure 32, 80 students answered, where 36% Male students chose often, 13% of them chose sometimes, 1% chose Never. While 33% Female students chose often, 14% of them chose sometimes, 4% chose Never. This information sheds light on the different approaches taken by male and female students to listening to English speakers. It indicates that while a slightly higher percentage of female students selected "Sometimes," a slightly higher percentage of male students chose "Often." "In this both male and female students, the "Never" category which indicates those who do not pay attention when someone is speaking English is extremely low. This suggests that the great majority of students in both groups actively listen to what is being said in English, which is a crucial ability for communication and language comprehension.

PART E: AFFECTIVE STRATEGIES

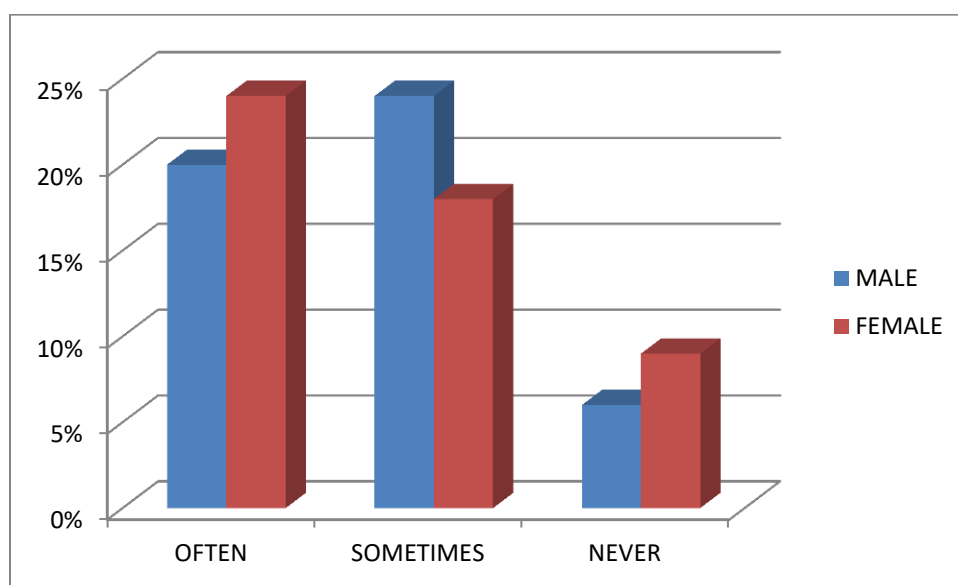
Fig 39: (Q: 39) I try to relax whenever I feel afraid of using English.



According to figure 39, 80 students answered, where 25% Male students chose often, 15% of them chose sometimes, 10% chose Never. While 20% Female students chose often, 19% of them chose sometimes, 11% chose Never. This information sheds light on how male and female students deal with their worries or fears when speaking in English. It indicates that while a higher percentage of female students selected "Sometimes," a higher percentage of male students selected "Often." Male and female students both fall into the "Never" category, which denotes students who do not actively attempt to de-stress when they feel uncomfortable speaking in

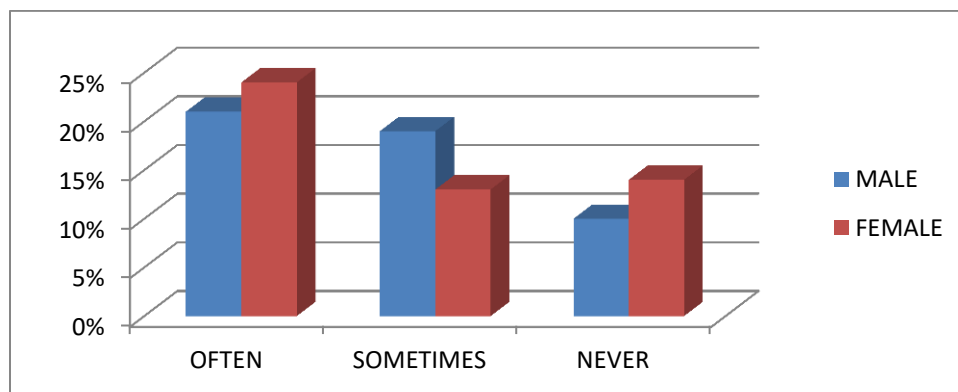
English, but the percentage of male students is noticeably higher. Overall, the data reveals that most students male or female try, though at different frequencies, to relax and control their fear or anxiety when using English.

Fig 40: (Q: 40) I encourage myself to speak English even when I am afraid of making a mistake.



According to figure 40, 80 students answered, where 20% Male students chose often, 24% of them chose sometimes, 6% chose Never. While 24% Female students chose often, 18% of them chose sometimes, 9% chose Never. This information sheds light on the strategies used by both male and female students to overcome their fear of making mistakes when speaking English. It appears that more female students than male students selected "Often," with a slightly higher percentage of male students choosing "Sometimes." Both male and female students fall into the "Never" category, which represents those who do not push themselves to speak English because they are afraid of making mistakes. However, the percentage of male students in this category is significantly higher. Overall, the data shows that most students male or female encourage themselves to speak English even when they are apprehensive about making mistakes, though they do so at different rates. This indicates their commitment to overcoming their fear and honing their English speaking abilities.

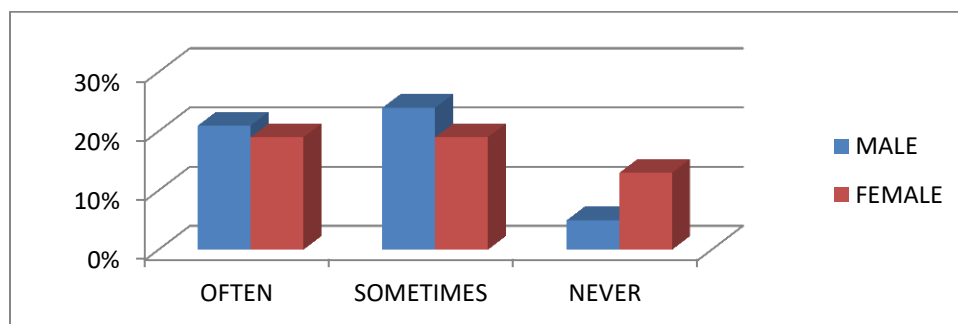
Fig 41: (Q: 41) I give myself a reward or treat when I do well in English.



According to figure 41, 80 students answered, where 21% Male students chose often, 19% of them chose sometimes, 10% chose Never. While 24% Female students chose often, 13% of them chose sometimes, 14% chose Never. This information sheds light on the approaches used by both male and female students to stay motivated when they perform well in English through providing motivation or treats. It indicates that while a slightly higher percentage of male students selected "Sometimes," a slightly higher percentage of female students chose "Often." Both male and female students fall into the "Never" category, which indicates those who do not use treats or rewards as a form of motivation; the percentage of female students in this category is slightly greater. Whole, the data shows that a sizable percentage of student's male and female alike use treats or rewards as a motivating strategy when they do well in English, though at different frequencies. This approach may be used as a technique for positive reinforcement to improve their language learning motivation and success.

PART F: SOCIAL STRATEGIES

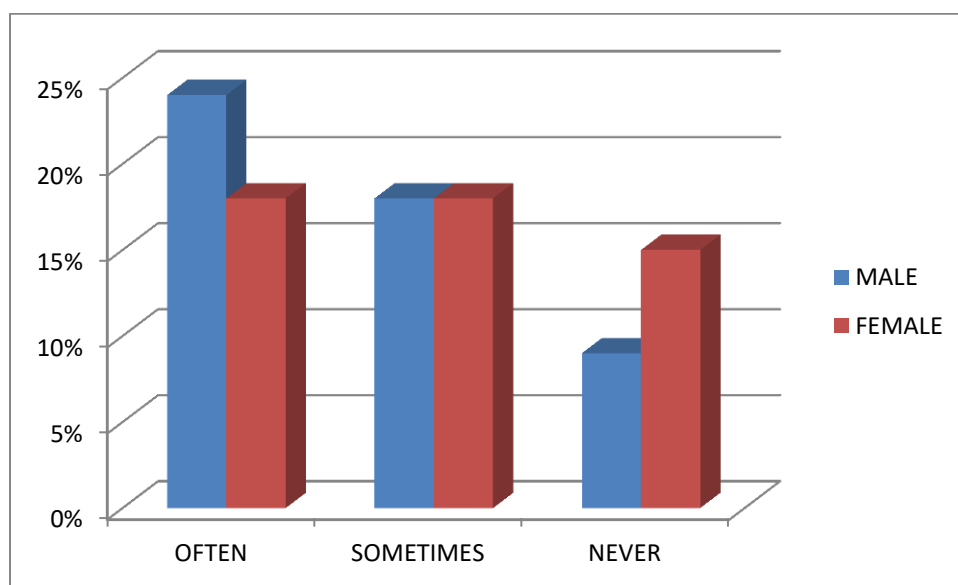
Fig 45: (Q: 45) If I do not understand something in English, I ask the other person to slow down or to say it again.



According to figure 45, 80 students answered, where 21% Male students chose often, 24% of them chose sometimes, 5% chose Never. While 19% Female students chose often, 19% of them chose sometimes, 13% chose Never. This information sheds light on the strategies used by male and female students to overcome understanding difficulties in English conversations. The results indicate that a slightly higher proportion of male students selected "Sometimes" than female students, while a slightly higher percentage of female students chose "Never." Both male and female students fall into the "Never" category, which denotes students who do not seek clarification when they do not understand something in English. However, the percentage of female students in this category is significantly higher.

Overall, the data indicates that a sizable percentage of students regardless of gender are willing, albeit at different frequencies, to ask someone to repeat or slow down something in English when they are having trouble understanding it. This proactive strategy aims to increase language competency and understanding during conversations.

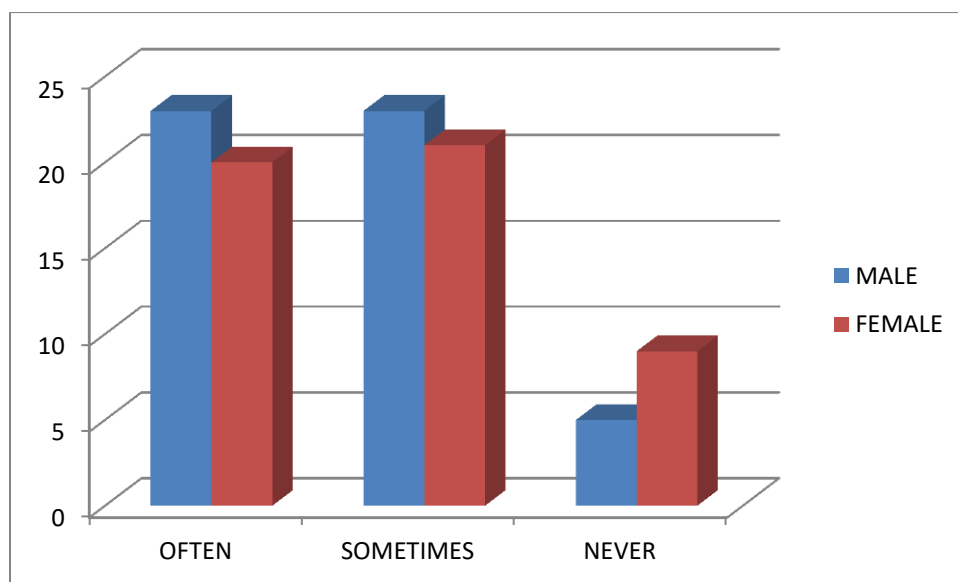
Fig 46: (Q: 46) I ask English speakers to correct me when I talk.



According to graph 46, 80 students answered, where 24% Male students chose often, 18% of them chose sometimes, 9% chose Never. While 18% Female students chose often, 18% of them chose sometimes, 15% chose Never. This information sheds light on how students—male and female—ask English speakers for advice and criticism during conversations. It indicates that

while female students had a slightly higher percentage of "Never" choices, male students chose "Often" at a higher rate than female students. Both male and female students fall into the "Never" category, which denotes those who do not actively seek correction when speaking with English speakers. The percentage of female students in this category is slightly higher than that of male students. Overall, the data shows that a significant percentage of students male or female are willing to ask native English speakers to correct them when they speak, though their frequency of doing so varies. The first step for improving language and communication accuracy is to ask for correction.

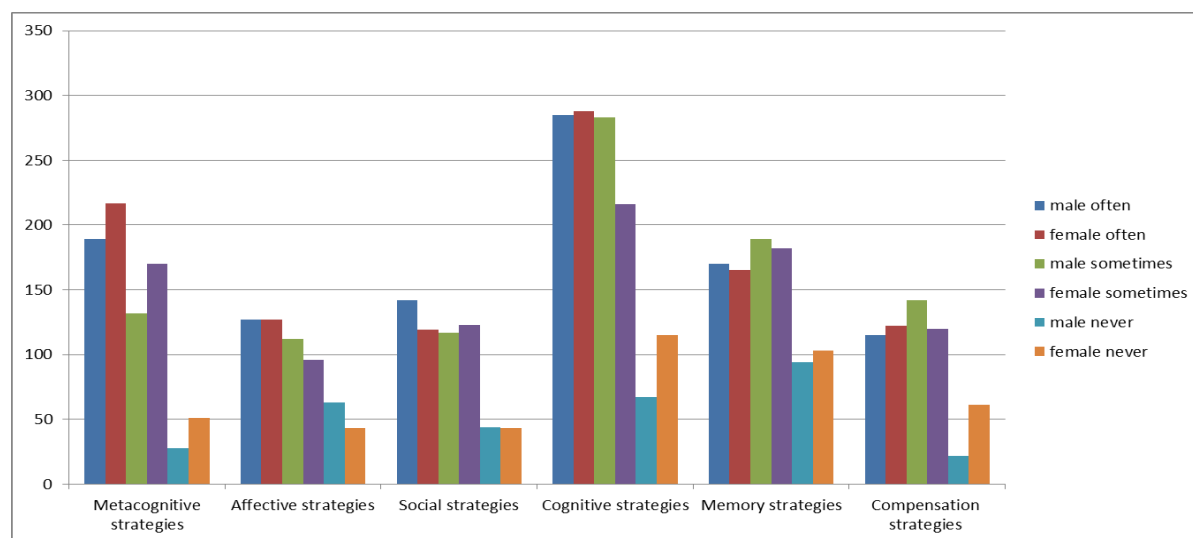
Fig 47: (Q: 47) I practice English with other students.



According to figure 47, 80 students answered, where 23% Male students chose often, 23% of them chose sometimes, 5% chose Never. While 20% Female students chose often, 21% of them chose sometimes, 9% chose Never. This data sheds light on how male and female students practice their English language skills collectively with other students. It indicates that while female students had a significantly higher percentage in the "Never" category, male students had a higher percentage selecting both "Often" and "Sometimes" than female students. Female students are more likely than male students to fall into the "Never" category, which indicates students who do not actively practice their English with other students. As a whole, the data shows that a significant number of student's male and female alike practice their English with other students,

albeit at differing frequencies. Enhancing language proficiency and communication skills can be achieved through collaborative language practice.

Comparative Analysis of strategies used by male and female



According to figure 80 students answered in which 40 are male and 40 are female students which are used these strategies. Metacognitive strategies are mostly used by female learners as compare to male learners. Affective strategies are mostly used by male learners as compare to female learners. Social strategies are mostly used by male as compare to female learners. Cognitive strategies are mostly used by female learners as compare to male learners. Memory strategies are mostly used by male learners as compare to female learners. Compensation strategies are mostly used by female learners as compare to male learners. Male students use memory strategies to remember new English words, such as mental pictures, rhymes, and reading texts. They also use affective learning strategies to lower anxiety and increase confidence in speaking. Social strategies are used to ask for help from peers, participate in conversations, and work in pairs to produce good speech, especially when phoning unfamiliar words. These strategies help improve fluency and motivation in speaking English. The study reveals that female students use cognitive strategies to manipulate target language and complete tasks correctly. Metacognitive strategies, such as practicing words and repeating sounds, enhance self-regulation and motivation for learning. These strategies are highly prevalent among all participants. The compensation strategy, which involves using gestures to support speech, strengthens the meaning of words articulated by female students.

DISCUSSION

The questionnaires comprised the domain of direct and indirect strategies having 6 classifications: Memory, cognitive strategy, meta-cognitive, compensation, affective and social strategies. The data set of analysis is being discussed according to the sub scales of LLS (language learning strategies). This section provides an interpretation of the findings of the study and gives a report and analysis of strategy use among Shaheed Benazir Bhutto University students.

The initial question of the study sought the answer to explain different kinds of the LLS used by male and female students of English department at undergraduate level. In order to obtain the answers of research questions, it was very necessary to select participants and tools which lead to get assumed destination. Therefore, statistics analysis was performed to know the most frequent use of LLS. After deep analysis of the given data it was found that male students were frequent users of memory, affective and social strategies and female students use cognitive, metacognitive and competence strategies.

For first research question, according to the findings, male ESL learners most frequently use memory affective and social strategies were the most common strategies used by undergraduate students of Shaheed Benazir Bhutto University, Shaheed Benazir Abad among other six strategies. Male students employed these strategies by relationships between what they already know and new things they want to learn in English. They remember a new word by making a mental picture of a situation in which the word might be used; use rhymes to remember new English words. Students write new vocabulary in a book, reading the text and watching western movies. The memory strategy helps students to increase the fluency of speech by increasing the interaction with many resources.

Male Students frequently employ the affective learning strategy. The affective strategy employed through lowering anxiety and encouraging one helps them be confident while delivering speech. The students were able to participate in the conversation when they were interested in the subject discussed the students' motivation to speak increases when they are confident with the language.

Male students were able to use social strategies extensively. The students applied this strategy when asking help from their peers, during small group discussions and working in pairs to

produce good speech. They need help from their peers specially to check the pronunciation of unknown words.

The present finding resonates with the observations made by Smith and Johnson in their study, 'Understanding Language Learning Strategies in Male Learners.' In their research, Smith and Johnson found that male language learners exhibit a notable preference for memory-based strategies, indicating a tendency to rely on memorization techniques for language acquisition. Furthermore, the parallel use of affective and social strategies by male ESL learners in your study aligns seamlessly with the social interaction aspect identified by Smith and Johnson. The findings suggest that, consistent with their work, male learners engage in language learning not only through memory-focused methods but also by actively participating in social interactions. This could involve conversing with native speakers, engaging in group discussions, or utilizing social networks as a means of enhancing their language skills.

For second research question as presented in results, female ESL learners most frequently use cognitive, metacognitive and Compensation strategies used by undergraduate students of Shaheed Benazir Bhutto University, Shaheed Benazir Abad among other six strategies. The cognitive strategy used to manipulate the target language or to complete given tasks correctly. Most of the students employed cognitive strategies to drill and practice the language or to find meaning of unknown words and terms in online dictionaries and goggle translate.

Basically, metacognitive strategy empowers female students to think about their own thinking. This is awareness of the learning process enhances their control over their own learning; it also enhances personal capacity for self-regulation and managing one's own motivation for learning. And this strategy based on the thinking of students so they used highly this strategy for their language learning. Analyzing the strategy subscales use for all participants it was found that metacognitive strategies were found as highly and most frequently used among all strategy types. These strategies include practicing words and sounds, repeating sounds or words, translation, summarizing etc.

The compensation strategy used by female students in which applies when students use gestures to support their speech. The students applied this strategy to strengthen the meaning of the words that they articulate.

The present findings are closely mirrors the observations made by Garcia et al. in their study, 'Exploring Learning Strategies in Female ESL Learners.' In their research, Garcia et al. found compelling evidence that female language learners exhibit a strong inclination towards cognitive engagement, emphasizing analytical thinking and active processing of linguistic information. The arrangement with metacognitive strategies suggests that, similar to the findings of Garcia et al., female ESL learners in your study display a heightened awareness of their own learning processes. This may involve setting goals, monitoring their comprehension, and employing strategies for self-regulation in the language learning journey. Furthermore, the emphasis on competence strategies resonates with Garcia et al.'s work, which emphasized the importance of female learners in understanding and effectively applying linguistic rules. The competence-oriented approach implies a focus on mastering language skills, including grammar, vocabulary, and overall language proficiency.

For third research question: difference between male and female ESL learner's use of LLS. After deep analysis of the given data it was found that male students were frequent users of memory, affective and social strategies and female students use cognitive, metacognitive and competence strategies. Gender differences may also affect the use of language learning strategies. Hamilton (2008) reported that females used cognitive strategies significantly more often than males. The differences may be associated with women's better awareness of cognitive development, as argued by Hamilton (2008). In a study of adult language learners, Ehrman and Oxford (1989) found that females reported significantly greater use of language learning strategies than male students. For example, female students reported significantly higher use of three strategies: general study strategies, authentic language use strategies, strategies for meaning communication, and self-management strategies. The authors hypothesized that gender differences in language learning strategy use may occur because of male greater social orientation, stronger verbal skills, and greater conformity to linguistic and academic norms.

"The identified differences in strategy usage between male and female ESL learners in your study closely align with the insights collected from the research conducted by Brown and Lee in their study, 'A Comparative Analysis of Language Learning Strategies across Genders.' In their investigation, Brown and Lee highlighted variations in language learning approaches based on gender, which strongly resonate with the distinctions observed in this research. The present

finding that male ESL learners frequently employ memory, affective, and social strategy aligns with the emphasis on memory-based strategies and social interaction noted by Brown and Lee. This suggests a consistent trend across studies that males tend to favor strategies rooted in memorization and social engagement to enhance their language learning experience. Similarly, the emphasis on and competence strategies among female ESL learners in this study mirrors the trends identified by Brown and Lee. The analytical and reflective approach exhibited by female learners in your research aligns seamlessly with Brown and Lee's observations of females adopting strategies that involve deeper cognitive engagement, metacognitive awareness, and a focus on language competence.

CONCLUSION

This study was performed with the aim of shedding light on the difference of language learning strategies (LLS) use among sbbu SBA English department students and explored the possible relationship between the use of LLS and gender. The SILL questionnaires comprised the domain of direct and indirect strategies having 6 classifications: Memory, cognitive strategy, meta-cognitive, compensation, affective and social strategies. This questionnaire used to investigate into language learning strategies among male and female ESL learners at Shaheed Benazir Bhutto University. The investigation is concluded with the results that the language learners of SBBU, SBA can improve their language skills with the help of L2 compulsory classes if they are passionate and motivated to learning L2. The study's conclusions showed that male students represented the majority of those who used engaged memory, affective, and social strategies. They put a significant value on social engagement, confidence-building, and memorization techniques as essential components of their learning process. However, female students suggested critical thinking, self-awareness, and a focus on language proficiency, leaning toward cognitive, metacognitive, and competence strategies.

These findings, which indicate broader patterns observed in male and female learners, correspond with established research on gender-based differences in language learning strategies. The majority of male language learners for memory-based and socially interactive approaches correspond with the significance they placed on social interaction and memorization during their language learning process. On the other hand, the focus that female learners established on deeper

cognitive processing and mastery of linguistic rules is reflected in their preference for cognitive engagement, metacognitive awareness, and language proficiency mastery.

Gender appears to have an impact on the selection and utilization of language learning techniques; this influence could come from social orientation, linguistic proficiency, and acceptance to language norms. Developing an understanding of these opinions based on gender can help teachers better adapt their language teaching strategies to meet the needs of different types of learners.

In the end, this study highlights the importance it is for educational frameworks to acknowledge and take into consideration gender-based variations in language learning techniques. Teachers can create more inclusive and productive language learning environments that meet the unique needs and inclinations of male and female students by recognizing and utilizing these preferences.

The current study examined that how language learning strategies is used by male and female of Pakistani students using a quantitative approach and a descriptive design. In order to get a better understanding of the phenomenon of L2 learning, there is still sufficient space for research on the use of language learning strategies, especially self-regulated learning strategies, in Pakistan's rural and urban areas. In order to get a deeper picture of the strategies employed by language learners, researchers should also employ additional research methodologies, such as in-depth interviews, class observations, diaries, and longitudinal studies.

LIMATATIONS OF THE STUDY

"Despite the useful information this study provided, it is important to acknowledge its limitations as they could affect how the results are interpreted and applied in a broader context. The purpose of this section is to openly discuss the limitations that were experienced during the research process and how they might have affected the study's conclusions.

The limitations of this study were as follows:

- 1) As the questionnaire was the main instrument in this study, its data is based on self-report, so it is possible in the strategy questionnaire that the respondents overestimated or underestimated the frequency with which they use certain strategies (Cohen, 1998).

- 2) In this present study researcher has focused on six language learning strategies used by male and female ESL Learners of English department undergraduate students at Shaheed Benazir Bhutto University, Shaheed Benazir Abad.
- 3) In this study researcher is limited to collect data from 80 students from them, 40 are male and 40 are females of ESL learners from all batches of Shaheed Benazir Bhutto University, Shaheed Benazir Abad.
- 4) This study is also limited to the actual text, internet sources, and several research articles under the sense of the sources of language learning strategies used by male and female students.
- 5) This research used the modified version of SILL (Strategies inventory language learning) questionnaire of Oxford (1990), which has actual 50 statements researcher follow all statements.
- 6) In this study researcher are limited on (memory, cognitive, compensation, Meta-cognitive, affective and social strategies). Used by male and female ESL learners.

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