

The Importance of Language Learning Strategies in Foreign Language Teaching

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RESUMEN

Este artículo llama la atención sobre la importancia de las estrategias de aprendizaje en la enseñanza de lenguas extranjeras. En primer lugar, estas estrategias son definidas y clasificadas, para a continuación pasar a examinar los factores que pueden influir en la selección que los alumnos hacen de las mismas. Las implicaciones de carácter pedagógico de «learning to learn» o «aprender a aprender» en la clase de lenguas modernas son analizadas a la luz de los principios expuestos anteriormente. Una conclusión de este trabajo es que los profesores, además de desempeñar una labor docente y de instrucción, deben asimismo convertirse en «facilitadores» del aprendizaje, tratando de lograr que sus alumnos sean cada vez más autónomos. Asimismo, se señala que tanto los cursos de idiomas extranjeros como los libros de texto y otros materiales confeccionados para estos cursos deben ser lo suficientemente flexibles para poder combinar elementos estrictamente lingüísticos, con la práctica y el entrenamiento del alumno en diversas estrategias de aprendizaje.

PALABRAS CLAVE: Estrategias de aprendizaje. Lengua extranjera, Aprendiendo a aprender, Autonomía, Entrenamiento estratégico.

ABSTRACT

This paper draws attention on the importance of learning strategies in foreign language teaching. Learning strategies are first defined and classified, and the factors involved in learners' strategy choice are then discussed. The pedagogical implications of «learner training» or the «learning to learn» are then analysed in the light of all these principles. One of the conclusions of this article is that teachers, apart from being instructors, should become «facilitators» of learning by developing students' autonomy. Furthermore, it is argued that foreign language course designs as well as textbooks and teaching materials should be flexible enough to combine successfully linguistic and strategy training components.

KEY WORDS: Learning strategies. Foreign language, Learning to learn. Learner's autonomy, Strategy training

I. INTRODUCTION

For a long time, research in both foreign language learning and teaching has ignored the contributions made in this area by general learning theories. This oversight has been made on the grounds that foreign language learning constituted something completely different with its own identity and independent of other disciplines or fields of knowledge. This argument was used by Psychology to justify the fact that foreign language learning should be considered in isolation.

Over the last two decades, the opposite trend has been detected and a large number of second language learning researchers such as Fillmore (1979), Ellis (1985), Willing (1988), Ellis and Sinclair (1989), Oxford (1989), O' Malley and Chamot (1990) and so forth, have studied specific factors of foreign language learning, such as learning strategies, in the light of general theories of learning. The present paper starts by defining and characterizing learning strategies and «strategy training» or «learner training». It then discusses the choice of strategies as a capital question in language learning, together with the factors involved in strategy choice. Finally, the implications that «strategy training» or «learner training» may have for teachers, foreign language students, materials development and general course design are envisaged and explored.

II. HOW CAN LANGUAGE LEARNING STRATEGIES BE DEFINED?

It is not easy to describe them because there has not been unanimous consensus on their definition. Willing (1988) points out that learning entails assimilation and language strategies are characterized as any means learners use to transform the external input into internal and personal resources and skills. For Oxford, they are «specific actions taken by the learner to make learning easier, faster, more enjoyable, more self-directed, more effective, and more transferable to new situations» (1989:8). Rubin and Wenden view them in terms of «behaviours learners engage in to learn and regulate the learning of a second language» (1987:6).

At least five main features can be inferred from the literature reviewed:

- a) Strategies play an important role in second language learning as they promote and facilitate language learning;
- b) Learners themselves are the actual agents in their use and choice of strategies as they are directly affected by them;
- c) Language learning, as learning in general, has to be internalized and strategies are in fact problem-solving mechanisms or techniques used by learners to cope with the complex process of learning;

d) Learning strategies are not always observable to the human eye. This explains why foreign language teachers, in general, are not conscious of them; and

e) Strategies are flexible and it is logical to think that they can be taught and learners can be trained in their management. As a consequence of that, it is possible to speak of «strategy training» or «learner training» as the techniques used by teachers to make learners aware of the existence of their own strategies and train them in their practice.

III. HOW CAN LEARNING STRATEGIES BE CLASSIFIED?

If there has not been common agreement on the definition of strategies, the same can be said of their categorization and classification. Different typologies have been established and these include sets of strategies such as *direct*, *indirect*, *cognitive*, *metacognitive*, *social*, *communicative*, *linguistic*, *non-linguistic*, *analytic*, *Gestalt*, *compensation* and *retrieval*. For the purposes of our discussion, we are just going to refer to cognitive, metacognitive, social and communicative strategies, as these are four groups of strategies included in most classifications.

Cognitive strategies are fundamentally operations used by the learner to obtain knowledge and understanding of the linguistic system. A learner who finds a difficult word in a text and succeeds at inferring its meaning from the context would be putting a cognitive strategy in operation (see appendix, activity 1). Other cognitive strategies are generalizing, making comparisons between languages, making associations between words, practising as well as analysing and reasoning (Oxford 1989).

Metacognitive strategies are concerned with how to learn or with learning to learn. These language learning strategies involve being aware of and thinking on the learning process together with planning, monitoring and self-evaluating. Setting goals and objectives, planning and organizing language tasks, directed attention and self-management are generally considered as strategies belonging to this group (Oxford 1989). Thus, the student who keeps a record of the material covered in each of the language lessons is, for example, making use, consciously or unconsciously, of a metacognitive strategy (see appendix, activity 2).

Fillmore (1979) explores the scope of social strategies and she associates them with the social behaviours learners adopt in language learning. Counting on friends for help, participating in group conversations while not understanding fully what is being discussed, and cooperating with others, are examples of social strategies

Communication strategies have been almost exclusively studied in relation to oral production. The foreign language learner taking part in a conversation is obliged to make a series of decisions on how to comprehend and convey the message effectively and this process will bring about a series of adjustments. Ellis defines them as follows,

Communication strategies are psycholinguistic plans which exist as part of the language user's communicative competence. They are potentially conscious and serve as substitutes for production plans which the learner is unable to implement. (Ellis 1985:182)

Paraphrase, avoidance, restructuring, code-switching, foreignizing, literal translation and repetition are grouped under this label.¹ The learner, who mentally plans in advance the message to be communicated is using a communication strategy. The same is true when learners repeat the same words several times before actually speaking or avoid specific expressions which are unknown to them and finally decide to paraphrase them.

IV. IS THE CHOICE OF EFFECTIVE STRATEGIES A DETERMINANT FACTOR IN LANGUAGE LEARNING?

If we agree on the fact that learning strategies promote learning and if we also acknowledge the existence of a wide number of strategies, it can be concluded that they constitute an important factor to be considered in foreign language learning/teaching.

Earlier research on strategies (Naiman *et al.* 1978, Stern 1975, Rubin 1981) was mainly restricted to the study of the Good *Language Learners (GLLs)*. GLLs are then described as self-aware, inquisitive, tolerant of ambiguity, self-critical, realistic, willing to experiment, actively involved and organised.

Some years later, Rubin and Wenden (1987), Oxford (1989) and, Ellis and Sinclair (1989) maintain that once strategies which promote and facilitate learning have been identified, learners should be trained and taught in the use of those good strategies. This general principle should be handled with care. We believe that strategies can and should be taught, but learners possess their own set of strategies; we do not feel the need for imposing on them a particular strategic

¹ For a complete definition and classification of communication strategies, see Hyde (1982), Ellis, R. (1985) and Manchón Ruiz (1985).

system which may not be in keeping with their personality, cultural background, cognitive style, age, etc. Therefore, students should be made aware of the existence of language learning strategies and they should be encouraged in their use by offering them a series of possibilities or alternatives, and allowing them to choose and experiment with those sets of strategies which suit them best.

V. WHAT FACTORS INFLUENCE STRATEGY CHOICE?

At the level of language teaching, the main problem found with most of the studies on language learning strategies lies in the fact that the notion of the GLL universally sharing a series of good language strategies has been taken on board too readily. However, the existence of a number of factors directly affecting the strategy choice made by learners has been generally ignored. As Willing suggests «any training process to develop learning strategies has to take all such factors into consideration» (1987:289). They can be described as follows:

- *Personality traits*

Personality exerts a direct influence on the learners' selection of strategies (extroversion versus introversion, active versus passive).

- *Motivation level*

Highly motivated students adopt a positive attitude towards teaching and learning, and this brings with it the practice of a series of particular strategies different from those of low motivated learners.

- *Learners' expectations and learners' purpose for learning the language*

Learners will adapt their strategies according to their objective and subjective needs.'

- *Sex*

O'Malley (1985 a) shows that secondary school girls resort to a different use of strategies from that of their male peers.

² A general distinction is usually made between learner's *objective* and *subjective* needs (Richterich and Chancerel 1977, Nunan 1988). Objective needs can be identified by analysing the language proficiency of the learners and identifying the purposes and possible patterns of use of the language. Subjective needs, in contrast, correspond to the student's affective needs, interests, desires, wants, expectations and preferences on learning style and teaching activities.

- *Task requirements*

Some activities demand from learners a high number of mental operations for their solution. According to O'Malley (1985 b), students are prone to use a larger number of strategies with complex language tasks and vice versa.

- *Ethno-cultural background*

Strategies seem to be culturally bound although this has not been proved by research with hard data. Ethnographic studies of Riley's kind (1981) follow this direction.

- *Age*

O'Malley (1985 b) showed that adults do not use the same sort of strategies as secondary school pupils.

- *Teachers' expectations and instruction*

Teachers may constrain the learners' framework and use of strategies if they show a prescriptive attitude in their approach to teaching.

- *Stage of learning*

O' Malley (1985 a) and Palacios (1994 a and b) prove that advanced learners tend to use different types of strategies from more elementary ones. There is a general trend towards a higher number of metacognitive strategies as the student progresses in his/her learning.

- *Cognitive style*

It is quite reasonable to think that the manner in which the learner perceives, monitors, conceptualises and recalls linguistic information affects the learner's strategy choice. Consequently, foreign language teachers should offer and promote a wide variety of strategies from which students can choose according to their own learning style.

VI. WHAT ARE THE IMPLICATIONS OF LEARNER TRAINING FOR TEACHERS?

If we intend to consider the implications of «learner training» for teachers, we need to revise first what is meant by the roles of both teachers and learners together with the factors affecting those roles. It is generally assumed that although teacher's and student's roles may be different, there exists a correlation between them; in other words, one role is affected by the other.

Traditionally, teachers have been considered to play two primary functions: instructional and managerial. On the one hand, teachers communicate, provide, supply and transmit knowledge to learners. In short, they are instructors. On the other hand, teachers are also in charge of the organization of the class, make important decisions, devise activities, produce materials, plan and assess students' work. They perform the role of managers as well. These two functions complement each other and in practice it is difficult to separate one from the other.

In a more up-to-date and humanistic perspective (Moskowitz 1973, Rogers 1983 and Nunan 1988), teaching and learning processes are the result of a mutual cooperation and interaction between teachers and learners. Learners have become the real managers of learning and as a consequence, a change in focus from the teachers to the learners seems to be necessary. Nunan refers to this as «the learner-centred curriculum».³ The teacher is now a facilitator of learning and should equally deal with the strengths and weaknesses of their learners. However, as Allwright (1981) claims, we should not expect learners to be specially gifted and show particular skills at the types of decision-making involved in the management of language learning. Here lies the justification of «learner training» as a means to involve learners in deciding on their own learning.

Research (O'Malley 1985 a, Oxford 1989, Ellis and Sinclair 1989) supports the belief that learners who receive learner training generally learn better than those who do not. So, Horwitz (1988) and Wenden (1991) encourage teachers to discover the prescriptive beliefs of their own students and, then, translate this knowledge into teaching strategies with the purpose of enabling learners to approach second language learning autonomously and successfully. It is also important that students themselves be given opportunities to reflect on their own learning process so that they may become aware of their own criteria and of how these ideas influence their learning.

The new role of the teacher emerging from these principles will aim at:

- a) Giving advice, that is, counselling learners on the development of learning objectives and learning strategies;
- b) Developing in students a series of strategies independent of the teacher's support and leading to individualization, self-directed and autonomous learning, both inside and outside the classroom;

³ The «learner-centred curriculum» is defined by Nunan as the curriculum in which there is «a collaborative effort between teachers and learners, since learners are closely involved in the decision-making process regarding the content of the curriculum and how it is taught» (1988:2).

- c) Involving students as much as possible in the whole teaching and learning processes;
- d) Making students responsible for their decisions and encouraging student self-assessment and evaluation by stimulating the production of a series of agreed criteria;
- e) Raising awareness with respect to their use of strategies and on their views of language, language learning and language teaching;
- f) Respecting learners' cognitive style and attempting to match as closely as possible the teaching style with learners' cognitive style: and
- g) Creating the circumstances in which students become familiar and apply strategies appropriate for the type of activities being used.

Furthermore, as was mentioned above, the teacher must also consider the factors intervening in the choice of strategies suitable for the learner, prepare the ground and make the students understand from the very beginning the objectives intended to be achieved.

VII. WHAT ARE THE IMPLICATIONS OF LEARNER TRAINING FOR COURSE DESIGN?

Most of the existing language courses are designed to improve the learners' communicative competence. It is generally admitted that by the end of the course, if this has at least been successful enough, students will have reached some linguistic objectives. Accepting that learner training may play or actually plays an important role in foreign language learning, a certain number of learner training tasks should be included in the general course structure. This means that two main areas should be covered: linguistic/ communicative development and learner training (see appendix). A suitable integration of these two features should be fully achieved as learners may react against learner training that is not sufficiently linked with their own language learning.

Wenden (1987) claims that the following factors should be taken into account when deciding how to integrate learner training with language training:

- a) range and specificity of the learner training component of the course;
- b) when and how it is going to be applied; and
- c) learners' needs.

In other words, we have to know whether the focus is going to be on general skills or on particular ones. inside or outside the classroom and compatible with learners' subjective and objective needs.

Ellis and Sinclair (1989) suggest that for a perfect integration of the two levels previously mentioned, a framework with two stages could be followed. The first stage would consist of a preparation for language learning and would be concerned with the development of metacognitive strategies. Stage two would be centred on both cognitive and metacognitive strategies connected with specific linguistic tasks.

Oxford (1989) offers a model similar to the previous one with three different phases. Firstly, awareness training, that is, «consciousness-raising or familiarization training». Secondly, «one-time strategy training» or practising one or more strategies with specific tasks and, thirdly, «long-term strategy training», that is. students learn the importance of strategies and evaluate their own performance.

Apart from the integration of these two components (linguistic and strategy training). learning factors such as age and students' language level, resources, motivational and affective issues, learners' background and context should be also borne in mind by the course designer.

Learner training in the target language is only suitable for intermediate and advanced foreign language students. but such training for elementary language students should be carried out in the mother tongue. Children will probably not be very receptive to learner training activities as most of them may involve a high degree of abstraction. We cannot forget, either, that learners from different cultural backgrounds will respond according to their general beliefs on language learning and language teaching.

The time variable and the context are also important factors to keep in mind. In a state school, for example, teachers are bound to follow a general syllabus and important adjustments will have to be made if the component of learner training is intended to be introduced.

The structure of a course of this type should not be closed. On the contrary, it should be open enough to allow for possible changes according to the learners' ongoing needs, interests, suggestions and initiatives. In the end, it should promote opportunities for self-directed learning and autonomy.

The implications of learner training for course design can then be summarized as follows:

a) Teachers should keep learning factors (age, language level, ethno-cultural background, etc.) in mind when designing the foreign language courses. It is advisable that a needs analysis should be conducted before the beginning of the course to identify learners' objective and subjective needs. A needs analysis of this kind may give an indication of the strategies (cognitive, metacognitive, social and communicatioii) teachers should select and develop;

b) Learners should be informed from the very beginning about the general aims of the course and should even be involved in the course design;

c) The course structure should not be prescriptive. On the contrary, it should be flexible, evolving and developing according to the learners' needs. There should be time for individual consultation and self-access;

d) Both the linguistic development and the learner training component must be fully integrated so that students may consider the whole structure of the course as a unit rather than as a combination of bits and pieces;

e) Learners' strategies should be developed and learners should be left free to use their preferred learning strategies not only in the classroom but also outside the classroom. All this should lead ultimately to self-directed and autonomous learning;

f) Teachers should plan and design tasks that may stimulate the learner's use of strategies;

g) Teachers should consider resources available in terms of the possibilities for setting up a classroom library, a writing/reading room, language laboratory, video room, a self-access centre and so on; and

h) Ideally, students should be capable of extrapolating their language learning strategies and their language learning experience to other areas of the curriculum.

Designing and running a course with these characteristics is not an easy job because it involves a high degree of flexibility, working with quite a high number of variables, options and resources. However, in the long run, it may be worthwhile in terms of the pedagogical objectives accomplished.

VIII. WHAT ARE THE IMPLICATIONS OF LEARNER TRAINING FOR MATERIALS PRODUCTION?

Allwright's views on the roles of teaching materials are our starting point. According to him, we need teaching materials «to save learners from our deficiencies as teachers» (1981:6), in spite of the fact that these materials may be quite limited in their scope because they do not always account for many of the aspects involved in the complex management of learning. Allwright (1981) finally advocates the need for *learning materials* rather than *teaching materials* and he introduces the notions of learners' *guides* to language learning and *ideas* and *rationale* books for teachers.

This shift in focus from teaching to learning materials is highly relevant and fits perfectly well in our discussion of learner training. If we take a look at general English language teaching text-books, it can easily be perceived that they

are basically thought out for four main purposes. Firstly, presenting and systematizing language. Secondly, offering activities, tasks and exercises for the practice of the four language skills. Thirdly, introducing some aspects of the British and/or American cultural life and. fourthly, in some cases, not many, developing students' imagination.

In most of these teaching materials, there is no mention to learner strategy development and learning process reflection. It is true that in the last few years several attempts to fill in this gap have been made by some text-book writers such as Whitney (1985), Abbs and Freebairn (1989), Hutchinson (1985/87, 1990/93) and Greenall and Garton-Sprenger (1990/92). However, they have not been completely successful because learner training is not systematic and it simply consists of a series of sporadic tasks without a consistent rationale underlying them; furthermore. the materials especially oriented and designed for learner training (Oxford 1989, Ellis and Sinclair 1989) show serious weaknesses such as the imposition of a particular model of supposedly good strategies and the failure to integrate learner training with the student's linguistic development. Apart from this, these materials are not geared with the different levels of learners and they presuppose both small groups and bilingual classes. In our view, the materials needed to be really effective for learner training should offer a wide range of possibilities rather than imposing one and only one style of learning.

Learner training tasks then should be devised according to the following criteria:

- a) To build up confidence for experimenting with language;
- b) To provide learners with opportunities to make choices about their learning;
- c) To have a clear outcome (reflection and experimentation);
- d) To show «face validity» as language learning activities and the possibility of being «honestly» completed (Sturtridge 1989);
- e) To be susceptible to being used with large groups in both bilingual and multilingual classes;
- f) To promote a balance between learning processes and what is actually learnt;
- g) To be fully integrated with the other language development exercises;
- h) To help learners perform other exercises;
- i) To raise students' awareness of the rationale behind classroom activities;
- j) To be personal but at the same time having a reference point.

A couple of activities of this kind are presented in the appendix section as simple examples of what we mean. The first is aimed at the learner's reflection upon the use of reading strategies while the second exercise proposed is concerned with the development of the student's autonomy in language learning.

Learning to learn should be an essential part of language teaching materials. Text-book authors and material designers should provide practical and feasible ideas about language learning and learner training without imposing them on both teachers and learners. Therefore, a more open, flexible and systematic approach to materials production in the area of learner training is necessary.

IX. CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER STUDY

The limitations of our study will have been perceived by now. On the whole, learner-strategies research, as Skehan (1989) says, is still «at an embryonic stage». Real data and hard findings are needed to support the effective role of strategies in language learning. A clear distinction or, at least, a dividing line would be necessary to separate the good and the bad strategies. The interconnections among strategies should also be further analysed. A general framework that can be used to evaluate the relevance and effectiveness of learner training programmes in second language learning is also necessary. The ways, forms and means of combining strategy training with the learner's development of communicative competence should also be further explored. Learner training materials require more attention if they intend to perform their roles. Teachers' perceptions and experiences in the classroom about the whole field of «learner training» should be promoted.

It is true we are moving in a risky area. However, it has considerable attractions as the findings may have direct and immediate applications for language teaching and learning. Furthermore, it is closely and deeply related to the language learner and to the language learning process. On the whole, it remains a challenge.

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THE IMPORTANCE OF LANGUAGE LEARNING STRATEGIES

APPENDIX

1.- ACTIVITY 1

- Objectives:

- a) To make students more aware of the importance of reading strategies and to initiate them in their use.
- b) To encourage students' autonomy in their reading and to promote reading out of the classroom.

- Level: Upper-Intermediate/Advanced

- Materials: Tables 1 and 2

- Procedures:

- (a) Learners compare themselves with the profile of the good language reader (table 1) and question up to what extent they are different.
- (b) Students take notes of the main differences they are able to identify
- (c) In pairs, they contrast their notes
- (d) Students complete a questionnaire (table 2) to find out the sort of reading strategies they use. *(It may be necessary for the teacher to clarify some of the items on the questionnaire).*
- (e) Students make up a list with those techniques or strategies less frequently used
- (f) In groups of four, they compare their lists and exchange views
- (g) Guided by the teacher, the class has a general discussion on this topic and design a reading programme based on the general findings of the activity.

TABLE I

The following list is based on the research conducted by Hosenfeld (1984) on the strategies used by good or successful language readers. She asked some learners of Hispanic origin to read texts in English and tell her aloud the thoughts that came into their minds while they were trying to understand the text and decode meaning.

The good language readers:

- 1.- Keep the meaning of the passage in mind.
- 2.- Read in broad phrases.
- 3.- Skip inessential words.
- 4.- Guess from context the meaning of unknown words.
- 5.- Have a good self-concept as a reader.
- 6.- Identify the grammatical category of words.
- 7.- Demonstrate sensitivity to a different word order in the foreign language.
- 8.- Examine illustrations.
- 9.- Read the title and make inferences from it.
- 10.- Use orthographic information (e.g. capitalization)
- 11.- Refer to the side gloss if there is one.
- 12.- Use the glossary as the last resort.
- 13.- Look up words correctly.
- 14.- Continue if unsuccessful at decoding a word or phrase.
- 15.- Recognize cognates.*
- 16.- Use their knowledge of the world.
- 17.- Follow through with a proposed solution to the problem.
- 18.- Evaluate their guesses.

* cognate: words which have a similar spelling in the two languages.

TABLE 2

Are you a good language reader?

Circle the answer that describes how you approach reading in the foreign language.

A: always **O:** often **S:** sometimes **R:** rarely **N:** never

Do you tend to

* keep the meaning of the passage in mind?	A	O	S	R	N
* guess from context the meaning of unknown words?	A	O	S	R	N
* skip inessential words?	A	O	S	R	N
* have a good self-concept as a reader?	A	O	S	R	N
* identify the grammatical category of words?	A	O	S	R	N
* examine the illustrations that go with the text?	A	O	S	R	N
* read the title and make inferences from it?	A	O	S	R	N
* use orthographic information (e.g. capitalization)?	A	O	S	R	N
* demonstrate sensitivity to a different word-order in the foreign language?	A	O	S	R	N
* use the dictionary as the last resort?	A	O	S	R	N
* look up words in the dictionary correctly?	A	O	S	R	N
* use your knowledge of the world?	A	O	S	R	N
* continue if unsuccessful at decoding a word or phrase?	A	O	S	R	N
* recognize words with similar spellings in English and Spanish?	A	O	S	R	N
* follow through with a proposed solution to the problem?	A	O	S	R	N
* evaluate guesses?	A	O	S	R	N
* read according to the type of text you have in front of you (literary passage, letter, dialogue, advertisement, notice, note, report)?	A	O	S	R	N
* read according to your purpose, that is, to obtain the general idea, to find specific information, pleasure...?	A	O	S	R	N

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* Can you think of any other type of reading strategy you use and which has not been mentioned before?.....

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2.- ACTIVITY 2

- Objectives:

- (a) To train students in the practice of metacognitive strategies.
- (b) To help students organize their own learning.
- (c) To promote learners' autonomy.

(d) To encourage students' self-assessment

- *Level:* Low-Intermediate to Advanced

- *Materials:* Table 3

- *Procedures:*

(a) Students are asked to think back and complete the questionnaire (table 3) at the end of the week.

(b) Students write a letter to their teacher making reference to the replies given in the previous questionnaire.

(c) If there is time and if possible, teacher provides feed-back to the students' letters.

TABLE 3

Fill in this questionnaire at the end of the week. Be prepared to show it to the rest of the students and to your teacher.

- 1.- What did you like best in your English class this week?
- 2.- What did you enjoy the least? Can you think why?
- 3.- Make up a list with all the new words you have learned this week. Explain briefly their meaning, preferably in English. Use the dictionary if you have problems with this exercise.
- 4.- What new grammatical areas/functions have you studied this week? In what way are they different from your mother tongue? Give examples.
- 5.- What types of texts have you read this week? Have you devoted much time to them?
- 6.- What new expressions or phrases have you learned to say this week that you did not know before? Make up a list and explain in what contexts they can be used.
- 7.- What sort of written practice have you done this week? Have you written any essays, notes, messages, letters, reports, etc? What sort of difficulties did you come across?
- 8.- Have you done any listening practice? Have you listened to any tapes, native speakers, songs in English? Think for a little while how you overcame the problems you found.
- 9.- Think about the new words taught this week according to pronunciation. If you feel a bit unsure, check in the dictionary how they are pronounced. Try to do a bit of pronunciation practice. You can even record yourself on a cassette to see how it sounds.
- 10.- Plan your learning of English for the next week. Establish priorities, indicating first those things you inevitably should do and then refer to more secondary aspects.