Language Learning Strategies used by Students learning Kiswahili[1] as a Second Language (KSL) and the Implications in the Teaching of African Languages

Rose Acen Upor

Abstract

Success in learning a second language nevertheless an African language has proven a tremendous effort on the part of foreign adult learners enrolled in universities. Motivation and attitude as well as the strategies used by the learners themselves play an important role. However, the greatest challenge for this group of learners is the need to pass African language exams based on merit. This forces the students to engage learning strategies that not only require them to pass exams but at the same time make them overlook the purpose of achieving success in acquiring and learning the target language. This article looks at the language learning strategies used by university students enrolled in Kiswahili language courses and determine implications.

1.0 Introduction

A general definition of learning strategies is specific actions taken by the learner to make learning easier, faster, more enjoyable, more self-directed, more effective and more transferable to new situations (Oxford, 1990). Learning strategies play an important role in second language acquisition (SLA) and this has been highlighted by numerous writers and studies (Cohen, 1998; Cook, 2001; Ellis, 1994; Larsen-Freeman and Long, 1991; O'Malley and Chamot, 1990; and Oxford, 1990 & 1996). It has also been indicated that when comparing language learners, experts to novices, experts tend to use more systematic and useful problem solving and native language reading comprehension strategies. Better language learners generally use strategies appropriate to their own stage of learning, personality, age, purpose for learning the language and type of language. Good language learners use a variety of learning strategies including: (1) *cognitive strategies* for association of new information with existing information in the long term memory and for forming and revising mental models; (2) *meta-cognitive strategies* for exercising 'executive control' on planning, arranging, focusing and evaluating their own learning process, *social strategies* for interacting with others and managing discourse; (3) *affective strategies* for directing feelings, motivations and

---

[1] Note the author's use of prefix *Ki-* before *Swahili.* Languages belong to the Ki-/Vi- noun class gender and are always referred to with the prefix *Ki-* and it has deemed appropriate for the author to choose this form of address which means *"the language Swahili"* as opposed to bare "Swahili" that may but not necessarily, refer to *'Swahili speakers'.*

attitudes related to learning, and; (4) *compensation strategies* for overcoming deficiencies in the knowledge of the language; these strategies have been classified depending on the type of activities they would involve.

The appropriate choice of strategies helps to explain the performance of good language learners vis-à-vis poor language learners who in this case could be said to have made choices of inappropriate learning strategies or even the occasional weakness of the good ones (Oxford and Nyikos, 1989). Moreover, the fact that the amount of new information to be processed by language learners is high, learners will select an appropriate strategy to process the target language input. This will mean that strategies are also good indicators of how learners approach language tasks and problems during the process of learning. Language instructors can gather clues about how their students assess the target language situation so as to learn and remember the new input presented in the language classroom (Hismanoglu, 2000).

The language learner capable of using a wide variety of language learning strategies appropriately can improve his language skills in a better way (Fedderholdt, 1997). In other words, language learning strategies contribute to the development of the communicative competence of the students. Therefore, language teachers aiming at developing the communicative competence of the students and language learning should be familiar with language learning strategies (Lessard-Clouston, 1997; Hismanoglu, 2000).

2.0 Theoretical Framework
Language learning involves acquiring of the language skills of a particular language, both productive skills; *speaking* and *writing* and receptive skills; *reading* and *listening*. Language teachers engage students in array of activities in classes that focus on enhancing these skills in the foreign language. Oxford (1990) argues that learner strategies can be used to develop each of the four language skills with the underlying assumption that these four skills are very important and deserve special attention. Secondly, learning strategies help students to develop each of the skills.

It is worth noting that language learning strategies have been classified by many scholars (Wenden and Rubin, 1987; O'Malley et al., 1985; Oxford, 1990; Stern, 1992; Ellis, 1994). However, most of these attempts to classify language learning strategies reflect more or less the same categorizations of language learning strategies without any radical changes (Hismanoglu, 2000). This article will make use of the language learning strategy classification set forth by Oxford (1990).

Oxford (1990) has distinguished two major types of strategies; direct strategies and indirect strategies. Direct strategies are those strategies that directly involve the target language. All direct strategies require mental processing of the language. Indirect strategies are those strategies that support and manage language learning without directly involving the target language. All these strategies are oriented toward the broad goal of communicative competence. Oxford (1990) emphasizes that both strategy types support each other. However, within these two broad classes of strategies, the Meta-cognitive, Cognitive and Compensation strategies cut across this classification and are represented as shown in Figure 1, therefore resulting into a six stratification of strategies; Memory, cognitive, compensation, meta-cognitive, affective and social.
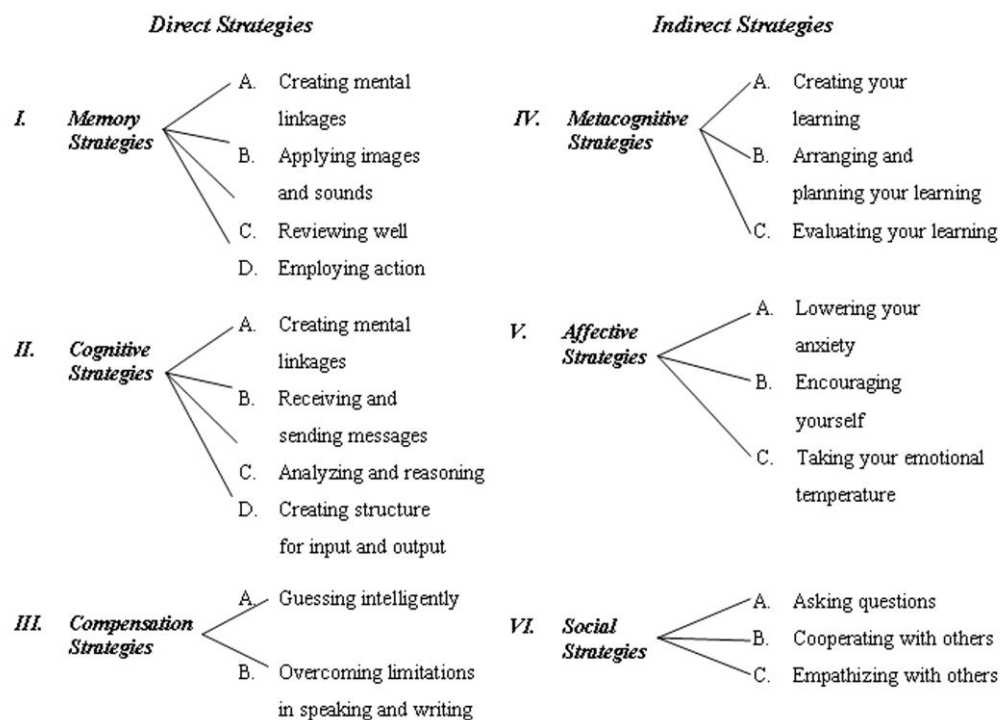
Direct Strategies

I. *Memory Strategies*
- A. Creating mental linkages
- B. Applying images and sounds
- C. Reviewing well
- D. Employing action

II. *Cognitive Strategies*
- A. Creating mental linkages
- B. Receiving and sending messages
- C. Analyzing and reasoning
- D. Creating structure for input and output

III. *Compensation Strategies*
- A. Guessing intelligently
- B. Overcoming limitations in speaking and writing

Indirect Strategies

IV. *Metacognitive Strategies*
- A. Creating your learning
- B. Arranging and planning your learning
- C. Evaluating your learning

V. *Affective Strategies*
- A. Lowering your anxiety
- B. Encouraging yourself
- C. Taking your emotional temperature

VI. *Social Strategies*
- A. Asking questions
- B. Cooperating with others
- C. Empathizing with others

Figure 1: Diagram of the Strategy System
Source: Oxford (1990)

Understanding the utilization of strategies by English Native speakers as they learn an African Language is an interesting phenomenon. This may fall in the general description of language learning strategies used by learners of any foreign language but also at the same time reveal subtle behaviors that could be pertinent to these learners of Kiswahili as a Second Language (KSL). This study intends to identify the strategies used by English native speaker learners of Kiswahili and also take note of the implications that these strategies spell out.

The application of this framework will constitute an array of strategies proposed to the students through statements in the research instruments without necessarily identifying their categorization as specific strategy types or sub-types. Categorization of the types and subtypes will be done in the analysis.

This study is a contribution to previous studies in learning strategies as it will attempt to highlight the importance of strategies in learning Kiswahili as it would be for other foreign languages.

3.0 Methodology

Learning strategies and Learner strategies are many times considered to be one of the same or sometimes different in the sense that learning strategies are more restricted to the strategies that contribute directly to the learning of a language. However, there are things that learners may do that contribute to their use of the language and their ability to monitor what they are doing (Archibald, 2006). This study chooses to treat both terms as referring to the same; this will also include their subtle differences. There will be an overlap between the terms depending on how certain references have treated the terms but regardless of this they will refer to both the restricted sense of the strategies and the strategies that learners use to contribute to their language and monitoring of the language.

The objectives of this study are to:

1. identify which types of learner strategies that students use more often in learning Kiswahili as a Second Language
2. determine how these strategies relate to the overall performance in the classroom language activities
3. determine whether the learning strategies contribute to the ability of expression in the second language
4. examine the implications of the strategies on the teaching of Kiswahili as a Second Language.

In achieving the objectives of the study the following methodological considerations were done in terms of the study sample, the data collection instruments and approaches, and data analysis. The study sample is two groups of students taking Kiswahili as a Second Language at the University of Georgia. All students were English Native speakers. Group A has 10 students who have studied Kiswahili for two semesters while Group B has 5 students who have studied Kiswahili for four semesters. However, only 8 students in Group A and 4 students in Group B were able to participate in the study due to limitations beyond the capacity of the researcher. All students are undergraduate students and their ages are between 19 and 28 years.

Two approaches were mainly used in the collection of data; "Talk about protocol" and a questionnaire. The questionnaire was structured and included both open and closed items. The closed items required responses from the students based on a Likert scale of *strongly agree* to *I don't know.* The questionnaires were self administered by the researcher. The "talk about protocol" required the students to talk about how they were going to solve three problems given to them by the researcher. They then later wrote down their responses on a sheet of paper that was later collected as part of the data.

The data from the questionnaire was analyzed on a descriptive basis so as to determine the overall patterns and the data from the "talk about protocol" was analyzed through compilation of all statements, presentation of views of the students and creation of relationships between the inferences made from the first set of data and the second set.

There were limitations to this study that may affect the outcome of the study in one way or the other. First, the size of the sample did not allow for a representational statistic analysis. In reducing the impact of this short fall, descriptive analysis of data on basis of frequencies and percentages has been used. This allows for a minimal platform for inference making on basis of the data collected. Moreover, in no way will this study be generalized to a wider population but it can be considered as an exploration of the learner strategies students' use in learning African languages. Second, the theoretical framework adopted by the study pauses a challenge in relation to the sample size, data collection methods selected and the level of knowledge of Kiswahili by the students. In minimizing this gap, the interpretation of the data has been based on direct/indirect strategies and the discussion circles around the six strategy classification by Oxford (1990).

4.0 The Kiswahili Programme and the Learner

The Kiswahili programme at the University of Georgia has been divided into three levels; elementary, intermediate and advanced. These three levels are taught in two semesters and are expected to be covered in three years. The introductory course provides students with the fundamentals of the Swahili language and culture. Emphasis is placed on grammar, pronunciation, reading, writing, and conversational skills. Selected texts and audio-visual materials are used to expose students to Kiswahili culture. Students are required to spend a minimum of one hour a week in the language lab. After completing a level (one semester), the students move to the next semester where the subsequent course are one level higher and introduce students to complex structures of the Kiswahili. The programme also runs an internet-based Kiswahili Programme

called KIKO[2], an acronym for *Kiswahili kwa Kompyuta* (learning Kiswahili through the Computer). KIKO is a multimedia course integrating the use of video, audio, and text. KIKO was created to correspond to the three levels of language proficiency offered in the Kiswahili programme at the University of Georgia. The plan is to facilitate gradual learning of Kiswahili both in the traditional classroom (during laboratory sessions) and independently. KIKO is a content-based course divided into units. Each unit has a number of lessons, and exercises with accompanying helpful grammar and cultural notes [3]. The programme also makes use of video and DVD documentaries that the students watch to learn more of the language, its culture and its speakers.

Learner proficiency is paramount in measuring the success of the programme and also in keeping in tide with the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) proficiency guidelines. It is important to review these guidelines since they would assist in the discussion of the data as illustrated in Table 1. These guidelines fall in line with need for achieving communicative competence among KSL learners as they use their strategies in attaining their goals.

Table 1: ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines- Speaking

Superior	Able to communicate in the language with accuracy and fluency in order to participate fully in conversations on a variety of topics
Advanced high	Able to perform all advanced level tasks with linguistic ease, confidence and competence
Advanced Mid	Able to handle a large number of communicative acts
Advanced Low	Able to handle communicative tasks although they are somewhat halting
Intermediate High	Able to handle uncomplicated tasks through exchange of basic information
Intermediate Mid	Conversation is generally limited to predictable and concrete exchanges necessary for survival in the target language
Intermediate Low	Able to handle successfully a limited number of uncomplicated communicative tasks, utterances filled with hesitation, require repetition
Novice High	Unable to sustain performance, can respond to simple directions and requests, utterances are simply expansion if learned material & stock phrases
Novice Mid	Communicate minimally and with difficulty, use a number of memorized phrases and isolated words limited to a particular context, pause frequently in search for simple words, tend to recycle the interlocutors words, lack of vocabulary
Novice Low	Have no real functional ability, pronunciation is unintelligible, unable to perform functions or handle topics and cannot participate fully in a true conversation

---

[2] Source: http://www.africa.uga.edu/Kiswahili/doe/
[3] Source: http://www.africa.uga.edu/Kiswahili/doe/kikonini.html

5.0   Data Analysis and Interpretation
5.1   Talk about Protocol

The students were engaged in class activities with the researcher and their discussion was rounded on three key areas in their learning of Kiswahili: (1) KIKO, (2) documentaries and, (3) take-home assignments. The researcher wanted to find out the learning strategies used by the students when involved in language learning activities. When talking about their KIKO online assignments most of the students in Group A said that they pulled up two screens when doing the exercises that follow the video clips. Here are a few statements by some of the students.

Student I:
"I open the video on one window and the assignment on another window, I read the questions then I try to find the answers in the video and I use the dictionary"

Student II:
"First go to the exercise then watch the video then back to answer the exercise"

Student III:
"Take the quiz while having the dialogues open, go over the vocabulary, read the grammar notes and cultural notes, then the last thing I do is to listen to the dialogue"

A very interesting finding from these statements by the students reveals an undeniable thrust towards getting the exercises correct rather than motivation towards achieving communicative competence in working on KIKO regardless that it is procedural for them to do the exercises after watching the video. Since the course is internet-based, it provides them with easy accessibility to refer back to the dialogues as they do KIKO even in the comfort of their rooms. A few students utilized other tools at their disposal such as the grammar notes and the cultural notes, while only one student chose to do the exercise first then later listen to the dialogue which was a non-traditional approach. Below is an account of the student's approach:

Student IV:
"I actually do not bother about the video a lot…………..(I) straight to the exercise and fill in the blanks because KIKO practically tells you the correct answer and wrong answer……….I watch the videos when I find the exercise interesting"

Unlike the Group A students, the advanced Group B students all mentioned that they begin by watching the video clip and reading the dialogue then afterwards they do the exercises. They also said that they watch the video clip more than once and they also read the dialogue more than once. One characteristic that was common between both Groups was how they worked on the online exercises. They said that they do the exercises using two windows; one with the dialogue and the other with the exercise, so that they can tell what part of the dialogue feeds into the exercise. This particular observation indicates that the students were not intrinsically motivated in learning Kiswahili. Miserandino (1996) observes that learners who are more intrinsically motivated are more involved and persistent, participate more, and are curious about school activities, whereas more extrinsically motivated students report feeling more angry, anxious, and bored at school and therefore tend to avoid school activities. The practices shown by Group A reflect a lack of motivation in learning Kiswahili. This can be correlated to a requisite that the students at the University of Georgia fulfill a language requirement stipulated in the University of Georgia General Education Curriculum[4]. The requirement obliges all students to demonstrate competency in a foreign language equivalent to completion of the third semester of study. In other words, most of the learners are extrinsically motivated to learn the language and therefore tend to use strategies that ensure that they pass the course. A similar experience was reported by Gallo-Crail and Zerwekh (2002) of students at Northern Illinois University learning Tagalog. They said motivation for learning the language was an important influence on the student's choice and use of strategies. Most of the students who fell below the mean on the quizzes took Tagalog only to fulfill their foreign language requirement. In their reported strategy use, they often used associational memory strategy, and translational cognitive strategy, to learn their vocabulary words. They used the other three strategies, clues (compensation strategy), culture (affective strategy), and overview (metacognitive strategy), only minimally. On the other hand, the students who fell above the mean all indicated high interest in the language.

As part of the learning experience, students watch film documentaries about Africa as a way of learning about the African Culture. When asked about the documentaries that they watched, the Group A students had the following to say about the aspects that were of interest to them and why:

---

[4] http://www.bulletin.uga.edu/Bulletin_Files/uga_req.html

Student II:
"I am interested in the nature aspects of it (documentary) how people interact it is very interesting" (Ecology Major)

Student IV:
"I really enjoy watching closely for the daily things that they do which are different from our culture" (Linguistics Major)

Student V:
"I think their everyday lives and customs are interesting, also the languages are interesting" (Linguistics Major)

Student VI:
"I am interested in the politics and the government, that's my Major"

The students always looked out for substance in the documentaries that related to their education majors at the university. Group B students were all interested in the documentaries based on the aspects that relate to their fields of study. However, they all made reference to their interest in the culture which was the main goal of having the students watch the documentaries in the first place.

As for take-home assignments, there was a wide spread consensus by all students who claimed that they used dictionaries, notes and handouts provided to them in a class to assist in tackling the language problems. They also mentioned an online Kiswahili-English dictionary as their source of vocabulary at times. Furthermore, they indicated that they preferred the online dictionary to the one in print simply because it saved them time and it was instantaneous instead of flipping through the pages of the print dictionary. Despite the fact that the students were encouraged to work in groups on the assignments, most of them preferred to work individually. They cited living arrangements and working situations as reasons for not being able to work in groups. A similar situation was reported by Gallo-Crail and Zerwekh (2002) where they attributed isolation to the language learning environment subsequently affecting the strategies used. Unlike learning in a second language setting, the participants in their study did not have a community where they could interact with others beyond the four walls of the classroom. Although the students were encouraged to work in groups for doing work outside the classroom, most of them reported that they worked individually rather than in groups.

These observations demonstrate that the students in the current study had limited use of language learning strategies and where they did make use of the strategies, they used meta-cognitive strategies. Based on their language learning motivations. It is clear to see that with low intrinsic motivation, learners do not

actively follow procedure in language tasks given to them. Hudley and Gottfried (2008) noted that low academic intrinsic motivation is a risk factor with regard to a broad array of academic outcomes. Seeing that the students chose to non-traditional procedures in language activities, it could suffice to conclude that the levels of retention of Kiswahili input would be generally low. Moreover, where the learners made use of meta-cognitive strategies, the protocol revealed the students value more the merit they would get at the end of the course rather than the achievement of communicative competence especially in the case of Group A students. Group B students, probably due to the length of time have spent learning the language tend to be more focused along the objectives of the language course. In reiteration of the use of meta-cognitive skills, several studies have also indicated that university students used meta-cognitive skills with the highest preference when compared with other language learning strategies (Simsek and Balaban, 2010; O'Malley *et al*, 1985; Fleming & Wharton, 1998; Deneme, 2008; Gallo-Crail & Zerwekh, 2002).

5.2 Questionnaires

The questionnaire asked questions on strategies that they use in: (1) writing assignments, (2) reading skills, (3) KIKO, (4) Listening and (5) speech. The data has been summarized in tables. The findings show that there is minimal difference as to how frequent the students use particular strategies as they attempt to learn Kiswahili. Table 2 illustrates the differences in students' strategies used in writing.

Table 2: Strategies used in Writing

Strategy	*N*	*Min*	*Max*	*Mean*	*SD*
I often write in Kiswahili first	13	1	5	3.77	1.013
I read the feedback from my previous writing	13	0	5	3.69	1.702
I use my background (world) knowledge to help me with ideas.	13	0	5	**4.08**	1.441
I try to write in a comfortable, quiet place where I can concentrate.	13	1	5	3.92	1.441
I use a dictionary to check things I am not sure about before or when I write.	13	4	5	**4.77**	.439
I make a timetable for when I will do my writing.	13	0	3	1.85	1.068
I like to write a draft in Kiswahili first and then translate it into English.	13	0	4	2.08	1.320
When I have finished my work I don't look at it again; it is finished.	13	1	5	2.23	1.235

An interesting factor is the high usage of dictionaries to check things that they are not sure about and this usage of dictionaries is also reflected in the writing

strategies in Table 3 with a perfect mean of 5.00 (SD=.000). However as part of their normal writing strategies, they tend not to use dictionaries as often as they would in reading on KIKO. One important observation that emerges from Table 2 is the use of their knowledge of the world in checking their writing assignments. This could be partly viewed as a response of the language-culture linkage that may provide an added interpretation of the language task.

As for the writing strategies used for assignments, low means were scored for the editing of the organization of their work and making notes and planning in Kiswahili. Moreover, they attached higher importance in editing for grammar, vocabulary, spelling and punctuation. This reiterates the findings from the 'talk about protocol' that indicated high use of meta-cognitive strategies more than other language learning strategies.

Table 3: Strategies Used in Writing Assignments

Strategy	*N*	*Min*	*Max*	*Mean*	*SD*
I often write in English first	13	1	5	4.08	1.320
I make notes and plan in Kiswahili before writing	13	1	5	2.92	1.382
I make an outline or plan in English	13	2	5	4.15	.899
I like to edit my work when I have finished writing a draft	13	2	5	4.08	1.115
I edit for grammar, vocabulary, spelling and punctuation	13	2	5	4.08	1.038
I edit my organization	13	1	5	3.38	1.557
I like to change, or make my ideas clearer as I write	13	3	5	4.31	.751
I use an English-Kiswahili, Kiswahili-English dictionary	13	5	5	**5.00**	.000
I go back to my writing to edit and change the grammar, vocabulary, spelling and punctuation	13	2	5	4.08	.954

However, it seems that the learners use English (their native language) as a framework for organising their thoughts before writing texts in Kiswahili (M=4.15, SD=.899). Not only do they do that, they also make use of the dictionary to assist in translation of texts (M=5.00, SD=.000). The opposite can be seen for Kiswahili, where they scored low (M=2.92, SD=1.382) indicating minimal planning in Kiswahili.

Table 4 on strategies used in reading demonstrates high level use of a number of strategies. Low mean scores were scored for *I give myself a reward when I get finished* (M=2.62, SD=1.446) though the maximum score was 5 and the minimum score was 1. This shows a spread opinion on whether students really

feel they have worked very hard or put in more time than usual in reading assignments. Regarding the fact that reading is a receptive skill, the students however scored high means (M=4.77, SD=.439) on the visuals. It seems visuals aid their understanding of the reading assignment better. However, this conflicts their approach in doing exercises on KIKO where they spend very little time on visuals (short video clips) and head straight to responding to exercises and using the video clips to check whether they have put in the correct responses.

Table 4: Strategies used in Reading

Strategy	N	Min	Max	Mean	SD
I read the topic or heading of the passage.	13	2	5	4.54	.967
I read the first sentence of the passage.	13	1	5	4.46	1.127
I look at the pictures or graphs in the passage.	13	4	5	4.77	.439
I go back to read some parts of the passage that I'm not sure about.	13	2	5	4.38	.870
I go back to read the details of the passage for the answers to some questions.	13	2	5	4.54	.877
I give myself a reward when I have finished.	13	1	5	2.62	1.446
I use a dictionary after I understand the main idea of the passage.	13	2	5	3.54	1.198
I discuss what I understand with my friends or teacher.	13	1	5	3.15	1.345
I think about the reasons why I am reading the text.	13	1	5	2.92	1.553
I split up (break) sentences into phrases or words for my understanding of the passage.	13	3	5	4.38	.650
I make inferences after finishing reading the passage.	13	2	5	4.00	1.080
I read the first sentence of the passage. I guess the meaning of some words from the context clues.	13	1	5	3.92	1.188
I use what I have learnt to help with my other English skills (writing, speaking, and listening).	13	1	5	3.62	1.387
I translate the sentences into Kiswahili for the main idea of the passage.	13	2	5	3.62	.870
I often read English texts first.	13	1	5	4.08	1.256
I take notes, highlight or underline the important points while I am reading the passage.	13	1	5	3.38	1.044

Table 5 on the strategies in reading used on KIKO illustrates mixed views. High mean scores on some of the strategies illustrate the higher usage of those

particular strategies than others such as *I look at the pictures/graphs in the passage* (4.85) since KIKO has a number of visuals. However, the disparity between the visuals and the making of inferences vis-à-vis the usage of dictionaries cannot help but be noticed. Furthermore, there is also a wide gap between the maximum and the minimum score. Despite the fact that the visual aspect is there to assist in inference making, students do not make use of it as much as they are supposed to. This agrees with the talk about protocol discussion on the focus of the students being good grades rather than learning the language.

Table 5: Strategies in Reading used on KIKO

Strategy	*N*	*Min*	*Max*	*Mean*	*SD*
I read the topic or heading of the passage.	13	4	5	4.77	.439
I read the first sentence of the passage.	13	4	5	4.77	.439
I look at the pictures or graphs in the passage.	13	4	5	4.85	.376
I go back to read some parts of the passage that I'm not sure about.	13	3	5	4.54	.776
I go back to read the details of the passage for the answers to some questions.	13	2	5	4.62	.870
I give myself a reward when I have finished.	13	1	5	2.69	1.437
I use a dictionary after I understand the main idea of the passage.	13	3	5	4.46	.776
I discuss what I understand with my friends or teacher.	13	2	5	3.54	1.127
I think about the reasons why I am reading the text.	13	1	5	3.38	1.557
I split up (break) sentences in to phrases or words for my understanding of the passage.	13	4	5	4.62	.506
I make inferences after finishing reading the passage.	13	1	5	3.85	1.144
I read the first sentence of the passage. I guess the meaning of some words from the context clues.	13	1	5	4.38	1.121
I use what I have learnt to help with my other English skills (writing, speaking, and listening).	13	1	5	3.69	1.548
I translate the sentences into Kiswahili for the main idea of the passage.	13	1	5	2.85	1.625
I often read English texts.	13	0	5	4.00	1.633
I take notes, highlight or underline the important points while I am reading the passage.	13	1	5	3.00	1.291

As for strategies used in role play, the least scored on is *Keep quiet and pray that the teacher does not call out my name* (M=2.85, SD=1.573), this shows that the levels of participation is speech activities are high however it is important to

note that there are indeed a number of students who feel this way in the foreign language classroom (cf. M=2.23, SD=1.166 for *Avoid communications partially or totally*). This reflects their affective filters are up and would therefore impede learning the target language. The Affective Filter hypothesis embodies Krashen's view that a number of 'affective variables' play a facilitative, but non-causal, role in second language acquisition. These variables include: motivation, self-confidence and anxiety. Krashen claims that learners with high motivation, self-confidence, a good self-image, and a low level of anxiety are better equipped for success in second language acquisition. Low motivation, low self-esteem, and debilitating anxiety can combine to 'raise' the affective filter and form a 'mental block' that prevents comprehensible input from being used for acquisition (Krashen, 1987 &1988).

Table 6: Strategies used during Role Play Performance in Kiswahili

Strategy	N	Min	Max	Mean	SD
Take a deep breath and outline a plan.	13	2	5	3.92	1.038
Look at my old notes and then prepare an outline for the role play.	13	4	5	4.46	.519
Make an outline in English.	13	3	5	4.38	.768
Make an outline in Kiswahili.	13	1	5	3.62	1.446
Ask others for help.	13	3	5	4.38	.650
Ask the teacher for assistance.	13	3	5	4.54	.660
Try to recall some of the basic words before asking anyone for assistance.	13	3	5	4.54	.660
I use an English-Kiswahili, Kiswahili-English dictionary.	13	4	5	4.77	.439
Keep quiet and pray that the teacher does not call out my name.	13	1	5	2.85	1.573
Guessing what am supposed to say in the situation.	13	3	5	3.85	.689
Switch to English whenever I am not sure of what to say.	13	2	5	3.92	.862
Avoid communications partially or totally.	13	1	4	2.23	1.166
Delay speech production and focus on listening.	13	2	4	3.00	.913

Moreover, these findings show that the students also made use of compensation strategies. Learners use compensation strategies for comprehension of the target language when they have insufficient knowledge of the target language. It allows the learners to use the language despite of their deficiency in grammar and vocabulary. A number of studies into language learning strategies have

indicated high to mid use of compensation strategies (Deneme, 2008; Medina, 2010; Yang, 1992; Gallo-Crail & Zerwekh, 2002; Lan, 2003; Lan & Oxford, 2004; Gunning, 1997). Moreover, they report that frequent use of the strategy resulted into greater proficiency among learners. Unlike the current study, Group A students did not have high proficiency in Kiswahili when compared to Group B. For the most part, when they had fulfilled the language requirement they did not proceed to take advanced classes in the course; an argument that takes us back to the issue of low intrinsic motivation for learning the language.

These observations raise issue as to whether the learners would have been successful in learning the language if at all they had a strong desire of succeeding. It was also noted that students with an affinity of taking advanced classes in the language had either visited Tanzania and/or Kenya. For others in the same group, their reasons were that they were planning to take a trip to Africa at some point in the future. Not to say that there were no heritage speakers, since one of the students i.e. a heritage speaker of Kiswahili in the advanced group took the course. Similar sentiments are shared by Gallo-Crail and Zerwekh (2002) of some of their Tagalog learners. They noted that the students who fell above the mean all indicated high interest in the language. Most were of Filipino heritage and desired to learn and speak the language. Some took the class to fulfill their foreign language requirement, but also to meet others from the Filipino culture. These students all expressed interest in achieving a high grade. They also reported a more diverse strategy use and they reported equally using association, translation, and the other three strategies, clues, culture, and preview of the next lesson. Other reasons for heritage learners taking a course in their heritage language are discussed by Lacorte and Canabal (2003). However, none of these reasons were explored for the students in the current study but nevertheless, they are worth mentioning. Lacorte and Canabal (ibidi) summarize several reasons that heritage learners may have for studying the heritage language: (1) to seek a greater understanding of their culture or to seek to connect with members of their family; (2) to reinforce the development of their own identity as members of a group with specific cultural characteristics; and (3) to take advantage of the demand for graduates with professional-level skills in a foreign language.

6.0 Conclusion
Revisiting the objectives of this study, the data collection methods, data analysis and the interpretation of the data, the following conclusions could be made:

First motivation plays a key role in gaining proficiency and use of strategies. Where motivation was low among the learners, their focus was on passing the

course rather than gaining proficiency in the language. All strategies used were directed towards passing the class. Second, the students made use of both strategy types; direct and indirect strategies. However, within each type of strategy they used certain subtypes more than the others. For example, in direct strategies, the learners made use of compensation strategies more than the other direct strategies while for the indirect strategies, they used meta-cognitive strategies. Third, their use of strategy types can be linked to their performances. A number of students who did not spend time in understanding the visual aspect of the assignment generally lost gist of the assignment. They performed poorly in the reading and writing assignments. Fourth, the learning strategies that the students use determine their ability to express themselves in the target language. Overdependence on notes (M=4.65, SD=.519), making an outline in English (M=4.38, SD=.768) and Dictionary use (M=4.77, SD=.439) show that the students have not exactly immersed themselves wholly into learning the target language and this could also relate to their levels of proficiency.

The ACTFL levels of proficiency provide a good basis of measuring students' ability in expression in a foreign language. From the overall data, it is noticeable that students in Group B are a level higher than those in Group A. However, on individual performance of the students, they can be ranged from Novice Mid to Intermediate Mid on the ACTFL ranking. This is because the students displayed various abilities within this range of description. Some students in Group B were able to hold brief conversations in Kiswahili however the conversations were generally limited to predictable content. In addition, they were also able to successfully complete a number of tasks in the target language at their level of proficiency. Meanwhile, students in Group B were able to respond to simple directions and requests and at times made use of memorized phrases and isolated words. Generally, emphasis should be made at making use of the students' strategies in developing their ability in the language and activities should be geared at lowering the affective filter of many so as to develop expression in the target language. Not only should instructors of African languages attempt to elicit for the motivations of the learners in learning the target language but also they should also seek for means of understanding the approaches that learners have towards language learning that may aid their success.

References

American Council on Teaching of Foreign Languages Proficiency Guidelines: Speaking, http://www.sil.org/lingualinks/languagelearning/OtherResources/ACTFLProficiencyGuidelines/ACTFLGuidelinesSpeaking.htm retrieved 14th October 2008.

Archibald, A. (2006). "Talking Shop: Learner Strategies." An Interview with Steven McDough, *ELT Journal* Vol.60, Issue 1 pp.63-70.

Cohen, A. (1998). *Strategies in learning and using a second language*. Harlow, England: Longman.

Cook, V. J. (2001). "Using the first language in the classroom." *Canadian Modern Language Review*, *57*, 3, 402-423.

Deneme, S. (2008). "Language Learning Strategy Preferences of Turkish Students," *Journal of Language and Linguistic Studies*, Vol. 4, 2.

Ellis, R. (1994). *The study of second language acquisition*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Fedderholdt, K. (1997). *Using Diaries to Develop Language Learning Strategies*, http://www.jalt-publications.org/old_tlt/files/98/apr/fedderholdt.html retrieved 13th January 2013.

Hismanoglu, M. (2000). "Language Learning Strategies in Foreign Language Learning and Teaching," *The Internet TESL Journal*, 6, 8 http://iteslj.org/Articles/Hismanoglu-Strategies.html,retrieved 13th January 2013.

Hudley, C. and Gottfried, A. E. (2008). *Academic Motivation and the Culture of School in Childhood and Adolescence*. Oxford: Oxford University Press

Gallo-Crail, R., and R. Zerwekh. (2002). "Language learning and the Intenet: Student strategies in vocabulary acquisition." In C. A. Spreen (Ed.), *New technologies and language learning: Cases in the less commonly taught languages* (Technical Report #25; pp. 55–79). Honolulu, HI: University of Hawaii, Second Language Teaching & Curriculum Center.

Gunning, P. (1997). "The learning strategies of beginning ESL learners at the primary level." Unpublished master's thesis, Concordia University, Montrėal, Québec, Canada.

Krashen, S. D. (1988). *Second Language Acquisition and Second Language Learning*. New York: Prentice-Hall International Inc.

Krashen, S. D. (1987). *Principles and Practice in Second Language Acquisition.* Prentice-Hall International.

Lan, L. R. (2003). "Learning strategy profiles and strategy Instruction for elementary school learners in Taiwan." Paper presented at the 2003 TESOL Convention, Baltimore, Maryland.

Lan, L. R. & Oxford, R. L. (2003). "Language learning strategy profiles of elementary school students in Taiwan." *International Review of Applied Linguistics in Language Teaching,* 41(4): 339-379.

Lacorte, M. & Canabal, E. (2003). "Interaction with heritage language learners in foreign language classrooms." In Blyth, C. (Ed.), *The sociolinguistics of foreign-language classrooms: Contributions of the native, the near-native, and the non-native speakers* (pp.107-129). Boston, MA: Heinle and Heinle.

Larsen-Freeman, D., and M., Long. (1991). *An introduction to second language acquisition research*. London: Longman.

Lessard-Clouston, M. (1997). "Language Learning Strategies: An Overview for L2 Teachers," *The Internet TESL Journal*, 3, 12 http://iteslj.org/Articles/Lessard-Clouston-Strategy.html retrieved 13th January 2013.

Medina, B. L (2010). "L2 Skills and the Use of Compensation Strategies:" The Case of Adult Learners, *Encuentro* 19, pp. 45-51.

Miserandino, M. (1996). "Children Who Do Well in School: Individual Differences in Perceived Competence and Autonomy in Above-Average Children." *Journal of Educational Psychology, 88*(2), 203-214.

O'Malley, J. M., et al. (1985). "Learning Strategy Applications with Students of English as a Second Language," *TESOL Quarterly* 19: 557-584.

O'Malley, J.M. and A. U. Chamot. (1990). *Learning Strategies in Second Language Acquisition.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Oxford, R. (1996). *Language learning strategies around the world: Cross-cultural perspectives.* Manoa, HI: University of Hawaii Press.

Oxford, R. L. and M. Nyikos (1989). "Variables affecting choice of Language Learning Strategies by University Students," *Modern Language Journal* Vol. 73, Issue 3 pp291-300.

Oxford, R. L. (1990) *Language Learning Strategies: What Every Teacher Should Know*, New York: Newbury House Publishers.

Simsek, A. and J. Balaban (2010). "Learning Strategies of Successful and Unsuccessful University Students," *Contemporary Educational Technology*, 1(1), 36-45

Stern, H.H. (1992). *Issues and Options in Language Teaching*. Oxford: OUP.

Wenden, A. and J. Rubin (1987). *Learner Strategies in Language Learning*. New Jersey: Prentice Hall.

Yang, N. (1992). "Second language learners' beliefs about language learning and their use of learning strategies: A study of college students of English in Taiwan." Unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of Texas, Austin.