

THE INFLUENCE OF EFFECTIVE LANGUAGE LEARNING STRATEGIES IN SECOND LANGUAGE ACQUISITION ON FOREIGN LANGUAGE TEACHING TO UNIVERSITY STUDENTS

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<https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.21105825>*

Abstract

The present study explores the role of language learning strategies in second language acquisition and their influence on foreign language teaching. Drawing upon the competency-based approach to language education, the study examines how strategic learning contributes to the development of communicative competence and learner autonomy. Particular attention is paid Rebecca Oxford's classification of direct and indirect language learning strategies, including memory, cognitive, compensation, metacognitive, affective, and social strategies. The research employs the methods of analysis, systematization, and generalization to investigate theoretical perspectives on language learning strategies and their pedagogical implications. The findings suggest that the conscious and systematic use of language learning strategies enhances language proficiency, promotes self-regulated learning, and improves learners' ability to communicate effectively in diverse contexts. Furthermore, the study demonstrates that contemporary language teaching methods can facilitate the development of strategic competence by creating learner-centered and communicatively oriented learning environments. The results highlight the importance of integrating strategy-based instruction into foreign language teaching in order to support successful language acquisition and the achievement of educational outcomes within the competency-based framework.

Keywords: language learning strategies, second language acquisition, foreign language teaching, communicative competence, competency-based approach, direct and indirect strategies, strategy-based instruction, university students.

Introduction. Global integrative trends, intercultural interaction, and rapid social development contribute to mastering one or more foreign languages not only to communicate with representatives of other cultures but also to improve professional skills since modern society requires specialists to solve global issues (Berger, 2021). Learning a language is a complex process that takes longer than anticipated. The term "learning a foreign language" includes the entire educational paradigm related to socio-cognitive, pragmatic, and ethical aspects of the foreign-speaking world. Language learning is described as the process through which an individual's capacity improves. Learning a language requires strategies, processes, and routines (Hashim & Hashim, 2018).

Effective teaching for university students requires moving beyond rote memorization into real world application. One of the most important tasks that teachers have to perform is that of organising students to do various activities using different methods, techniques, approaches, strategies, and platforms.

Our research **purpose** is to reveal and investigate current trends and strategies of teaching foreign languages aimed at maximizing learning efficiency.

The **tasks** of this article are to involve classifying the methods of foreign language teaching based on the competency-based approach and identifying the effective methods.

The **methodological basis** of this research includes methods of analyzing the practical experience of

foreign language teaching based on the competency-based approach, usage of our own experience, systematization, and generalization of sociological data.

Results. Language training is based on the purpose of teaching the learners' language they learn all the things about a given language. They are expected to learn functions, rules, linguistic forms, how to use language and acquire the language skills. On the other hand, learner training is based on learners and their difficulties in learning. Learners are provided with skills and strategies to be able to learn more easily and effectively.

The teacher help students facilitate their learning and be more effective in learning the target language. After getting learning some strategies, the students activate their metacognition, which means the students' awareness of the usage of the strategies. And the teacher plays a modeling role in teaching the strategies to students.

Learning strategy is the specific action to make the students better in learning a second language. In the early 1970s, language learners were seen to be more actively responsible for their own learning. Rubin investigated what 'good language learners' facilitate their learning. Such learners, according to Rubin, are willing and accurate guessers who have a strong desire to communicate and will attempt to do. He also observed that, improvement of students' language performance, develop their repertoire of learning strategies. Rubin (1981) states that, the strategies are not the preserve of

highly capable individuals, but could be learned by other moderate and slow learners (Rubin, 1981).

Learning strategies are special methods for solving a problem or task, designing a desired outcome, manipulating and controlling information obtained towards the interest of learning (Wegner, Minnaert, & Strehlke 2013). Learning strategies are the particular approaches or techniques that learners employ to try to learn the second language (Kolodko, 2023). Language learning strategies are conscious or potentially conscious actions and learners can identify them in their learning process (Cohen, 1998).

Learning strategies consist of “mental or behavioral activity related to some specific stage in the overall process of language acquisition or language use” (Ellis, 1994, p. 529), in other words, they can be behavioral (for example, repeating new words aloud to remember them) or they can be mental (for example, using the synonyms or situational context to infer the meaning of a new word) (Ellis, 1997). Learning strategies are specific actions taken by the learner to make learning “easier, faster, more enjoyable, more self-directed, more effective, more transferable to new situations” (Oxford, 1990, p. 8). So, students are required to take advantage of a good strategy in order to master the field of language.

According to cognitive learning theories, learners are active participants in the learning and teaching process rather than passive recipients. They do not just receive information from teachers as learning process involves learners processing information which includes mental activities (Hosenfeld, 1976; O'Malley & Chamot, 1990; Oxford, 1990). The aim of using strategies is to “affect the learner’s motivational or affective state, or the way in which the learner selects, acquires, organizes, or integrates new knowledge” (Weinstein & Mayer, 1986, p. 315). Oxford (1990) mentioned, “Strategies are especially important for language learning, because they are tools for active, self-directed involvement, which is essential for developing communicative competence” (p.7). Cohen (1998) defines language learning strategies as: “Those processes which are consciously selected by learners and which may result in action taken to enhance the learning or use of a second or foreign language, through the storage, retention, recall, and application of information about that language” (p. 4).

The use of language learning strategies helps learners control their own learning by developing language skills, increasing confidence and motivation in learning process. Moreover, learning strategies support different aspects of understanding, retention, and application.

Foreign language teachers face various tasks related to ethnicity, historical, social and cultural dilemmas. Different types of perception, knowledge structures, and the choice of expressing feelings and emotions are inherent in both teachers and students. And, for both of them, language learning and cognition are inseparable from the emotional component, which regulates adaptability to the changes caused by external and internal educational processes.

Students’ cognitive style may vary, too. A distinction is often made between analytical learners who prefer a deductive approach (give them a rule and let them deduce other examples from it), and holistic learners, who prefer an inductive approach (give them examples, and let them induce the rule).

Considering these issues within the framework of psycholinguistics, some studies (O'Malley and Chamot, 1990; Ko and Rossen, 2017; Marlina, 2018; Lui et al., 2021; McCallum, 2022) offer a set of inter-related methods and strategies, including (1) main types of metacognitive, cognitive and affective or social methods and strategies in students’ educational experience; (2) systematic approach to developing the competencies of a foreign language learner and teacher; (3) introduction of a psycholinguistic approach to learning and teaching a foreign language (ELL/ELT), that outlines the students, their personal characteristics; (4) support of language training programmes for graduates and postgraduates with ethnolinguistic components of intercultural learning.

According to Dörnyei, strategies are not the end for language instruction, but are suggestions for enhancing learner’s motivation and confidence. Dörnyei emphasized the importance of regular praise, positive reinforcement and supportive environment in strategy instruction. It is also highlighted that language learning strategies can be trained and taught, which is also suggested by many researchers (Cohen, 1998; Dörnyei & Skehan, 2003).

Oxford (1990) identified twelve key features of language learning strategies as follows:

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

O'Malley and Chamot (1990) developed three types of strategies, namely metacognitive strategies (selective attention, planning, monitoring, and evaluating learning activity), cognitive strategies (rehearsal, organization, inferencing, summarizing, reducing, imagery, transfer, and elaboration), and social / affective strategies (interaction, cooperation, questioning for clarification, and participation in communicative activities with others).

Following the classification model of language learning strategies proposed by Oxford (1990), based on the synthesis of her classification of learning strategies and previous work, (O'Malley & Chamot (1990) divided language learning strategies into direct and indirect strategies.

Direct strategies involve direct learning and require mental processing of the language (Oxford,

1990), which include (1) memory strategies, which assist learners in storing and retrieving new information through techniques such as grouping, imagery, reviewing, association, and semantic mapping; (2) cognitive strategies, which involve learners to understand and produce new ideas, such as reasoning, practicing, receiving and sending messages, analyzing, and summarizing, note-taking, and translating; (3) compensation strategies, which enable learners to overcome gaps in linguistic knowledge by guessing meanings from the context, using synonyms, paraphrasing, or employing gestures when necessary.

Indirect strategies, in contrast, support learning indirectly without directly involving the target language itself, but are powerful to learning process (Oxford, 1990), which include (1) metacognitive strategies, which allow learners to regulate their learning, such as paying attention, planning, organizing, self-evaluating and monitoring one's errors or the learning process, (2) affective strategies, which help learners regulate their emotions, motivation, anxiety, and confidence during language learning, such as lowering anxiety, self-rewards, self-encouragement; (3) social strategies, which facilitate learning through interaction with native speakers or the target language, cooperation, questioning, and participation in communicative activities, such as asking questions, cooperating with peers and improving cultural understanding.

The competency-based approach (CBA) to language learning focuses on the development of learners' ability to apply linguistic knowledge and skills effectively in real-life communicative situations.

Within this framework, successful language learning depends not only on instructional practices but also on the strategic actions learners employ to achieve communicative competence. While competencies represent the intended educational outcomes, direct and indirect strategies provide learners with practical means of achieving those outcomes. Direct strategies support the acquisition and use of linguistic knowledge, whereas indirect strategies foster learner autonomy, self-regulation, motivation, and effective participation in communicative contexts. As a result, language learning strategies constitute an essential component of competency development.

The application of these strategies is closely connected with methods used in foreign language instruction. Indeed, teaching methods create the conditions in which learners can develop and employ both direct and indirect strategies. For example, communicative language teaching encourages compensation and social strategies through authentic interaction, while task-based language teaching promotes cognitive and metacognitive strategies as learners plan, execute, and evaluate communicative tasks. Similarly, project-based learning and content and language-integrated learning (CLIL) require learners to combine cognitive, social, and metacognitive strategies in order to achieve both linguistic and content-related objectives.

Therefore, within the competency-based paradigm, language-learning strategies and teaching methods should not be viewed as separate elements but ra-

ther as complementary dimensions of the learning process. Competencies define the educational goals; learning strategies constitute the mechanisms through which these goals are achieved, and the teaching methods provide the pedagogical framework that supports the strategic development of communicative competence. This interconnected relationship forms the theoretical basis for investigating the influence of language-learning strategies on foreign language teaching and learning outcomes.

Furthermore, learning strategies help learners reflect over their own way of learning, aiming at improving their processes. It helps the learners identify their difficulties and competences at the learning activity, in order to anticipate and fill students' gaps and needs during the learning situation and, if necessary, ask for help. Using the learning strategies, learners make dialogue with one another, to activate their previous knowledge on the handling material and relate them with new piece of information.

Language learners can use memory, metecognitive, affective, cognitive, social, and compensation strategies to enhance their language learning. The successful learners are more likely to use strategies according to specific tasks, context, or different needs. The more effective learners used strategies more "appropriately, with greater variety, and in ways that helped them complete the task successfully" (Chamot & Kupper, 1989, p. 17). Successful language learners are more flexible and appropriate in their use of learning strategies (Ellis, 1997). Different strategies have been reported associated with different learning styles (Oxford & Cohen, 1992). Various factors have been found to influence learners' choice of language learning strategies. Chamot and Kupper (1989), Oxford (1994) identified factors that influenced the choice of language learning strategies including age, gender, learning style, cultural background, type of task, motivation, attitudes, and teacher perceptions. Motivated learners are more likely to use more strategies than less motivated learners and the reasons for studying the language also contribute to the choice of learning strategies. Learners with negative attitudes or beliefs often use less effective strategies (Oxford, 1994; Oxford & Nyikos, 1993).

Learner training should facilitate learners having access to methodological resources such as techniques and activities, and using a criterion for selection of materials. Cheng (2000) claimed that "any teacher, Western or Eastern, who plans to use methodologies which inevitably involve students' participation must make sure that the students are familiar with and accept such methodologies" (Cheng, 2000, p. 444). Teachers and researchers have recognised the importance of training learners in effective strategy to promote learner autonomy (Wenden, 1991). Teachers are encouraged to choose learning strategies suitable for students and teach them how to understand learning strategies.

To exemplify strategy-based instructions (SBI) in university foreign language education, we can look at several practical examples. For instance, in academic reading, students learn to apply metecognitive strategies, like previewing academic articles, identifying key arguments, distinguishing between main and supporting ideas, and monitoring comprehension while reading

research literature. In academic vocabulary development, they use cognitive and memory strategies including the use of word families, collocations, and concept mapping.

In research presentation tasks, before delivering presentations, students learn planning and organizational strategies, such as outlining content, identifying key points, anticipating audience questions, and using compensatory strategies when encountering lexical gaps during oral communication.

In academic writing students are trained to use metacognitive strategies throughout the writing process, including planning, drafting, revising, self-editing, and evaluating their work according to academic criteria. Reflection logs encourage awareness of successful writing strategies.

Independent learning projects and seminar discussions are both key components in fostering autonomous learning in higher education. In independent learning projects, learners develop self-regulated learning skills by setting language learning goals, selecting appropriate strategies and resources, monitoring their progress, and evaluating outcomes. Meanwhile, seminar discussions offer a structured yet interactive environment where students practice their speaking, questioning, and argumentation skills through debates and discussions. Students learn how to ask for clarification, reformulate ideas, negotiate meaning, and maintain interaction when faced with communicative difficulties. In both cases, learners apply language strategically, engage deeply with content, and refine their communicative competence, all of which are crucial for academic success in a university setting.

Conclusions. Language learning strategies constitute an essential component of successful second language acquisition and play a significant role in the development of communicative competencies.

Appropriate language learning strategies result in greater motivation and confidence. Strategy instructions can enhance learners' self-efficacy and autonomous learning and help learners to take responsibility for their own learning. Teachers need to provide learners access to methodological resources and appropriate learning and modeling strategies, and guidance to help learners make progress in achieving academic success and professional needs.

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