

# LEARNING STRATEGIES IN FOREIGN LANGUAGE LEARNING

**Shotova-Nikolenko A. V.**

*Candidate of Philological Sciences, Associate Professor*

*of the Department of Foreign Languages*

*Odesa State Environmental University*

*Odesa, Ukraine*

In recent years there has been a shift in focus from the teacher to the learner – from exclusive focus on the improvement of teaching to an increased concern for how learners go about their learning taste in a second or foreign language [1, p. 1]. In the last few years research literature on *Learning strategies* has experienced tremendous growth. Interest in *Learning strategies* is due in large part to increased attention to the learner and to learner – centred instructional models of teaching [1, p. 4]. Thus, it has become more visible that much or even most responsibility for success at language learning depends on individual learners, their ability to take full advantage of opportunities to learn.

It is *Learning strategies* which may lead to a more meaningful learning and a greater autonomy. Thus, that is the reason why they have been emphasized recently. On the other side, although *Learning strategies* are used by the students themselves, the teachers play an important role in helping the students to develop and use strategies in more effective ways.

To understand the term *Learning strategies*, one might use a common technical definition, which says that *Learning strategies* are operations employed by the learner to aid the acquisition, storage, retrieval, and use of information [1, p. 7]. It might be useful to expand this definition by saying that *Learning strategies* 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.

Learning itself is a conscious knowledge of language rules, but does not typically lead to conversational fluency, and is derived from formal instructions.

*Learning strategies* contribute to all parts of the learning-acquisition continuum, while acquisition is defined as an unconscious and spontaneous occurrence. Moreover, *Learning strategies* lead to conversational fluency and arise from naturalistic language use [1, p. 4].

*Learning strategies* have been used for thousands of years. One well-known example is the mnemonic or memory devices used in ancient times to help storytellers remember their lines.

Nowadays, language strategies are becoming widely recognized throughout education in general. Under various names, such as learning skills, learning-to-learn skills, thinking skills, and problem-solving skills, learning skills are the way students learn a wide range of subjects [1, p. 2]. R. L. Oxford synthesized existing research on how the following factors influence the choice of strategies used among the students learning a second language. Factors are as follows:

1) Motivation – more motivated students tend to use more strategies than less motivated students;

2) Attitudes and beliefs – these are reported to have a profound effect on the strategies learners choose, with negative attitudes and beliefs often causing poor strategy use or lack of orchestration of strategies;

3) Type of task – the nature of the task helps determine the strategies naturally employed to carry out the task;

4) Age and second language stage – the students of different ages and stages of second language learning use different strategies, with certain strategies often being employed by older or more advanced students;

5) Learning style – often determines the choice of second language learning strategies. For example, analytic style – students prefer strategies such as contrastive analysis, rule learning, and dissecting words and phrases, while global students use strategies to find meaning (guessing, scanning) and to converse without knowing all the words (paraphrasing, gesturing).

Basic categorization of language *Learning strategies* includes: 1) Direct strategies and 2) Indirect strategies.

*Learning strategies* that directly involve the Urget language are called *Direct strategies* [1, pp.37-39]. All *Direct strategies* require mental processing of the language, but the three groups of *Direct strategies* do this processing differently and for different purposes. There are three groups of *Direct strategies*: 1) *Memory strategies* – help the students store and retrieve new information; 2) *Cognitive strategies* – unified by a common function: manipulation or transformation of the target language by the learner. 3) *Compensation strategies* – enable learners to use the new language for either comprehension or production despite limitations in knowledge. They are intended to make up for an inadequate repertoire of grammar and especially of vocabulary. R. L. Oxford provides the learners with another detailed classification of the three groups of *Direct strategies*:

*Memory strategies* include:

A) Creating mental linkages: a) Grouping, b) Associating / Elaborating,  
c) Placing new words into a new context;

B) Applying images and Sounds: a) Using imagery, b) Semantic mapping,  
c) Using keywords, d) Representing sounds in memory;

C) Reviewing well: a) Structured reviewing;

D) Employing action: a) Using physical response or sensation, b) Using mechanical technique.

*Cognitive strategies* include:

A) Practicing: a) Repeating, b) Formally practicing with sounds and writing systems, c) Recognizing and using formulas and patterns, d) Recombining, e) Practicing naturalistically;

B) Receiving and Sending messages: a) Getting the idea quickly, b) Using resources for receiving and sending messages;

C) Analyzing and reasoning: a) Reasoning deductively, b) Analyzing expressions, c) Analyzing;

D) Contrastively (across languages), d) Translating;

E) Creating Structure for input and output: a) Taking notes, b) Summarizing, c) Highlighting.

*Compensation strategies* include:

A) Guessing intelligently: a) Using linguistic clues, b) Using other clues;

B) Overcoming limitations in speaking and writing: a) Switching to the mother tongue, b) Getting help, c) Using mime or gesture, d) Avoiding communication partially or totally, e) Selecting the topic, f) Adjusting or approximating the message, g) Coining words, h) Using a circumlocution or synonym.

Based on R.L. Oxford [1, p. 135- 136] *Indirect strategies* underpin the business of language learning. There are three groups of *Indirect strategies*:

1) *Metacognitive strategies* — allow learners to control their own cognition, that is to coordinate the learning process by using functions such as centring, arranging, planning and evaluating. The strategies mean beyond, beside or with the cognitive. Therefore, they are actions which go beyond purely cognitive devices and which provide a way for learners to coordinate their own learning process. 2) *Affective strategies* — help learners to regulate emotions, motivations and attitudes. 3) *Social strategies* — support and manage language learning without directly involving the target language. Language is a form of social behaviour, it is communication and communication occur between and among people. Learning a language thus involves other people and appropriate social strategies are very important in this process. So, R. L. Oxford provides the learner with another classification of three groups of *Indirect strategies*:

*Metacognitive strategies* include:

A) Centering your learning: a) Overviewing and linking with already known material, b) Paying attention, c) Delaying speech production to focus on listening;

B) Arranging and planning your learning: a) Finding out about language learning, b) Organizing, c) Setting goals and objectives, d) Identifying the purpose of a language task, e) Planning for a language task, f) Seeking practice opportunities;

C) Evaluating your learning: a) Self-monitoring, b) Self- evaluating.

*Affective strategies* include:

A) Lowering your anxiety: a) Using progressive relaxation, deep breathing or meditation, b) Using music, c) Using laughter;

B) Encouraging yourself: a) Making positive statements, b) Taking risks wisely, c) Rewarding yourself;

C) Taking your emotional temperature: a) Listening to your body, b) Using a checklist, c) Writing a language learning diary, d) Discussing your feelings with someone else.

*Social strategies* include:

A) Asking questions: a) Asking for clarification or verification, b) Asking for correction;

B) Cooperating with others: a) Cooperating with peers, b) Cooperating with proficient users of the new language;

C) Empathizing with others: a) Developing cultural understanding, b) Becoming aware of others' thoughts and feelings.

To conclude it is essential to remember that learners need to learn how to learn, and teachers need to learn how to facilitate the process. The general goals of such training are to help make language learning more meaningful, to encourage a collaborative spirit between a learner and a teacher, to learn about options for language learning, and to learn and practise strategies that facilitate self-reliance.

Once the teacher knows how the students are currently learning, he can help them to learn more effectively. That is the reason why *Learning strategies* are introduced and considered essential in an educational process.

## **Literature**

1. Oxford R.L. *Language Learning Strategies: What Every Teacher Should Know*. New York: Newbury House, 1990. 342 p.